





## Deal unlikely to end Yemeni rift

By Assem Abdul Mohsen  
Reuters

SANAA — Yemen's feuding leaders sign a peace deal next week but their mutual distrust runs so deep that the accord is unlikely to end a crisis tearing the country apart, political sources say.

Both President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his rival and deputy Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh have said they will sign the document in Amman on Feb. 20, pledging full support for the political and economic reforms it contains.

Sheikh Sanan Abu Luhoim, an independent member of an all-party committee that negotiated the deal and an influential tribal leader told a television interviewer on Saturday night: "There is simply no trust between the two sides."

Abdul Rahman Al Jefri, leader of the opposition Yemeni Peoples League and another member of the committee said: "Differences have handicapped the administration. Therefore it cannot and will not do anything."

"We will sign the accord before the eyes of the entire world, but nothing else will happen," Mr. Jefri said. "After the signing, each side will stick to its pre-signing position and start blaming the other for failing to implement the accord."

The sources said the accord, to be signed by all Yemeni political leaders in and outside the governing coalition, had little chance of success.

The feud had turned personal between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh, the leaders of North and South Yemen respectively who engineered the merger of the two countries in 1990.

Mr. Saleh, an army colonel turned politician who ruled the conservative north part of Yemen from 1978, agreed under the accord to devolve some of his powers to the cabinet and to authorities in the region to appease Mr. Beidh's Yemen Socialist Party.

But the sources said reconciliation was only possible if Mr. Saleh, among other things, loosened his tight grip on the security forces and government purse strings.

Mr. Beidh and his YSP, who

before the merger ran southern Yemen as a Soviet-style one-party state, will have to effectively give up control of southern armed forces that have remained separate almost four years after union.

He would also have to cede control of rich oilfields in southern regions that continue to be run from the southern capital Aden, they said.

All this looks impossible for the moment. It will take a long time for goodwill to be restored. Neither side is likely to concede any real powers until then, one source said.

An opposition source said: "Nothing has changed. They (the YSP and Saleh's General People's Congress) are paying lip service to the accord to placate public opinion."

"The real problem lies in who has the upper hand in running the country and controlling its resources," the source said.

Mr. Saleh wants Mr. Beidh and YSP ministers and officials, including Prime Minister Abu Bakr Al Attas, to return to Sanaa from Aden on the signing of the accord.

Mr. Beidh, whose party says 154 of its members have been killed since the merger, would like to see a start of implementing the accord before a gradual return to the capital Sanaa.

A northern colonel loyal to Mr. Saleh, Colonel Yahya Al Joubi, was seriously injured on Friday in the latest of a rash of political violence since July, GPC sources said.

Mr. Beidh, addressing a meeting in Aden last week, said he would seek a plebiscite if other partners in the coalition government failed to implement the accord. Apart from the YSP and GPC, the coalition includes the Islamist Islah Party of Parliament Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Ben Hussein Al Ahmar.

Mr. Saleh, in a message to the nation on the occasion of Ramadan which started on Friday called for the opening of a new page.

But one political source said: "The signing will be nothing more than a truce lasting perhaps until the end of Ramadan (mid March)."



An Afghan boy is comforted by his mother while being treated by a doctor at a Red Cross-supported south Kabul hospital. The boy suffers from abdominal and leg wounds caused by an exploding rocket fired during fighting between rival factions (AFP photo)

## Major urges Iran to lift Rushdie death sentence

LONDON (Agencies) — British Prime Minister John Major urged Iran Monday to revoke a five-year-old death edict on writer Salman Rushdie or face continued international isolation.

Mr. Rushdie, 46, has been in hiding under British police protection since his novel "The Satanic Verses" was denounced by Iran as blasphemy against Islam.

"We all want to make clear to the Iranian government that they cannot enjoy full and friendly relations with the rest of the international community unless and until we can be satisfied that there is no further direct or indirect threat from the Iranian authorities to Mr. Rushdie's life or to that of others associated with his book," Mr. Major said in a statement.

"I hope very much that they will listen to the message," said the prime minister, who demonstrated his full support for Mr. Rushdie at a meeting with the Indian-born British author last May that provoked fury in Tehran.

Mr. Major's statement was issued to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the death order, issued in a "fatwa," or edict, by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The book's Japanese translator has been murdered. The Italian translator has been attacked, and last October, Mr. Rushdie's Norwegian publisher William Nygaard was shot and seriously wounded in Oslo.

For five years, Mr. Rushdie has lived under constant protection of Scotland Yard's Special Branch, which still moves him around among an undisclosed number of safe houses.

The author's government protection has so far cost an estimated £5 million (\$7.5 million), of which he is said to have contributed more than \$500,000 of his own money.

On Monday, Rushdie supporters were turned away by the Iranian embassy in London Monday as they tried to deliver a letter supporting the author.

About a dozen members of the International Rushdie Defence Committee, including opposition Labour Deputy Mark Fisher and British novelist Julian Barnes, tried to deliver a message addressed to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani asking that he cancel the death sentence.

## Sporadic shelling continues in Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — Sporadic shelling rocked residential areas in eastern Kabul Monday, amid a growing casualty toll which now totals 16,000 injury cases registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Among the incoming mortar shells which slammed into the former diplomatic enclave of Wazir Akbar Khan district.

One hit an upper storey balcony and blasted shrapnel inside several rooms, fortunately unoccupied at the time.

The Red Cross estimate of war-wounded includes outpatients treated more than once, during the first 42 days of the 45-day factional fighting.

A further 500 casualties were recorded by the ICRC for January's fighting in the northern capital of Mazar-e-Sharif, with no information available as yet on casualties caused by fighting in western Fariab province and a reported outbreak of recent factional friction in southern Kandahar.

The first days of the fasting month which started Friday saw diminished bombardment between factions fighting for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul, but this has not resulted in fewer civilian casualties.

There were 255 patients jammed into the 180-bed Red Cross-supported hospital of Karte Se in south Kabul, where even the children's playroom is packed with war-wounded.

The plight of children in the Karte Se hospital is pitiful. The youngest patients seen were two girls aged about two years — one had her right arm blown off by rocket shrapnel and the other had lost her left leg.

Another eight-year-old girl suffering body burns lost both her mother and father in a rocket attack, but her distressed aunt asked how this girl's two-day old surviving sister would be fed.

There was still no official Kabul ceasefire despite reports that the warring factions had agreed to hold their fire for the first four days of the Ramadan fasting.

"Officially we have no ceasefire," said Defence Ministry officials, who nevertheless acknowledged that peace negotiations were continuing.

"Any future ceasefire will be temporary and conditional," they added.

## Gunmen ambush bus carrying Romanians in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Two gunmen opened fire at a bus carrying eight Romanian and two Egyptian engineers in the south Egyptian city of Assiut at dawn on Monday but no one was hurt, security sources said.

It was the first attack on foreigners in Egypt this year and the first since the militant Gama'a Al Islamiyah told tourists and foreign investors earlier this month that they should leave the country for their own safety.

The security sources said some bullets hit the bus and smashed windows.

The driver said he saw two people with pistols open fire from the front and side of the bus. The passengers all lay down on the floor and the bus did not stop, he added.

The engineers, eight Romanians and two Egyptians, work at the Assiut Cement Co. in the city, on the Nile 320 kilometres south of the capital Cairo.

Assiut is one of the centres of the Gama'a, the largest violent group trying to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with a strict Islamic government.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Jerusalem to swell to 700,000 population

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The population of Jerusalem will grow from 565,000 to nearly 700,000 by the end of the century, according to a municipal study published Monday. Sarah Hershkovitz, head of the city's strategic planning department based her estimates on land availability for building under current zoning laws. She found 32,000 more housing units could be put up for Jews and 15,200 for Arabs by the year 2000, but that the population growth could be greater if the laws were altered. Some 72 per cent of the population is Jewish and 28 per cent Arab.

### Campaign against Sikhs kills 2 in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Gunmen have killed two Sikhs and seriously wounded a third in a violent campaign targeting the Indian community here, Indian Ambassador Prem Singh said Monday. The attacks started on Nov. 3 when gunmen using silencers shot the three Sikhs. There was another murder attempt on a Sikh last Thursday and a shop owned by a Sikh was burned down on Dec. 31, with damages estimated at \$3.36 million. Men also reportedly threatened a store owner on Saturday. The ambassador could not say if the campaign had political or religious motives. Interior Ministry officials told AFP police were trying to track down the culprits, but did not think there was an organised campaign against the 160,000-strong Indian community in Kuwait. Mr. Singh criticised police in the industrial area of Al Shweikh, a western suburb of Kuwait City, for arresting 26 Sikhs before releasing them two hours later after Kuwaiti officials intervened. "Until now we have had no explanation for why they were arrested," the ambassador said. "The Indian community is worried."

### Iran protests to Czechs over controversial film

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran protested to the Czech Republic Sunday over the screening on Czech television of the Martin Scorsese film "The Last Temptation of Christ." The official Iranian news agency IRNA said. The protest was conveyed to the Czech ambassador to Tehran, Jiri Oswald, who was summoned to the foreign ministry. The ministry's director-general for Central and Northern Europe, Ebrahim Rahimpour, told Mr. Oswald the Czech government should "not allow the sentiments of Christians and Muslims to be further hurt." IRNA reported. Mr. Rahimpour said he hoped the Czech government would prevent moves against the prophets, which he said were carried out by "international circles, particularly the Zionists." The Czech Catholic Church also condemned the film, which portrays Jesus Christ living an ordinary family life, describing it as an "historical lie."

### Qatari TV airs report on embargo-hit Iraq

DOHA (AFP) — Qatari state television has aired a report on Iraqis suffering from international sanctions, the first such programme by a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Shot in various Iraqi towns, the first in four episodes focused on complaints by Iraqis about the effects of the sanctions on their daily lives and comments by Iraqi officials. Several of those interviewed said they could not understand why the embargo was being maintained "after Kuwait was returned to the Kuwaitis" and called for the Arab states to support Baghdad's position to have the sanctions lifted. Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh also told the programme that his country opposed a U.N. resolution allowing for the sale of limited quantities of oil under United Nations control. Iraq says the restrictions for the sale harm its sovereignty. Besides Oman, which has always maintained normal relations with Iraq, Qatar is the only GCC country to have restored links with Baghdad after it participated in the U.S.-led coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait in February 1991.

### Israel wants Thai workers for danger zone

BANGKOK (AFP) — Israel's agricultural cooperative wants to hire 350 Thai workers for its farms in the Gush Katif region south of the Gaza Strip, but has warned they could be in some danger, the Thai foreign ministry said Monday. All workers recruited by the Moshav movement will be sent to farms near Israel's border with Egypt, where the political situation remains uncertain, a ministry statement said. The workers will stay with their employers and their lives will be insured, but Thais should consider the possible danger and the working conditions before signing up, it said. Those who go will earn \$300 to \$400 a month. The political situation in the region remains unclear while Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation continue to hammer out a peace agreement, it said.

### Grenade hurts 1 at party office in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — One person was slightly wounded when a hand grenade was thrown into a crowded political party office in Istanbul, police said on Monday. They said an unidentified man tossed the grenade through a window into the crowded office of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party. A party worker was wounded in the neck. The blast shattered windows and damaged furniture, the attacker fled. No one claimed responsibility. The separatist Kurdish Labour Party has claimed responsibility for a time bomb explosion at a train station in suburban Istanbul on Saturday which killed five military cadets and wounded 50 other people.

### Piranhas pilfered from Tel Aviv zoo

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Fearless thieves have made off with two dozen red piranhas and a rare parrot from a Tel Aviv zoo, a zoo spokesman said Monday. The six-year-old talking parrot called Riki failed to sound the alert as the burglars broke into "The World of Silence" zoo through an attic window on Saturday night and made off with the carnivorous fish. They left behind a pair of heavy plastic gloves.

## Aideed seen as key to renewed civil war

By Peter Smerdon  
Reuters

MOGADISHU — Clan battles in the southern Somali port of Kismayu are reopening deep wounds as factions scramble for power.

Aid officials and U.N. military officers strongly believe no one wants a return to the two-year civil war halted by U.S. intervention in Somalia in December 1992 to end famine.

But they say the spark that would ignite renewed civil war would be intervention by Mogadishu warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed.

"The situation in the area remains tense with Kismayu city at the centre of the turbulence," said a senior U.N. military official on Sunday, adding that nearly all factions involved were negotiating secretly to build a dominant clan alliance.

The officials say control of Kismayu, gateway to the fertile south, is the prime outstanding dispute stirred back to life by a withdrawal of U.S. and allied western U.N. peacekeepers by March 31.

"Violence is not expected to be substantial unless there is SNA (Somali National

Alliance) support from Mogadishu," said the senior U.N. official, adding that SNA chief Aideed was doubtless monitoring the situation.

General Aideed, whose power base is in southern Mogadishu, fought a four-month war with U.N. peacekeepers until October last year when U.S. President Bill Clinton ordered a withdrawal of U.S. forces.

"There will be more trouble in Kismayu when forces regroup but everyone loses if it leads to civil war before the rains stop large-scale military movements from April," said a top aid official.

"At the moment it remains the largest of several worrying bubbles of violence which we had expected to arise with the U.N. withdrawal as factions sort themselves out," he added.

The first 100 German U.N. peacekeepers left Mogadishu on Sunday by ship for Mombasa, Kenya. The United States, France, Italy, Greece, Norway, Tunisia, Turkey and South Korea are also pulling their peacekeeping forces out by the end of March.

Dozens killed and wounded in Kismayu battles pitting militia loyal to Gen. Said Her-

si "Morgan" against his arch-rival Colonel Ahmad Omar Jess.

Aid workers who flew out of the port city on Saturday said Gen. Morgan's forces had driven out of Kismayu up to 5,000 civilians from the Ogadeni sub-clan who had trickled back since Col. Jess was routed from his former stronghold in April last year.

The U.N. military official said Friday's fighting was the retaliation by Gen. Morgan's wing of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) for an attack by Col. Jess's forces on Thursday against the town of Bulo Xaaji, 80 kilometres southwest of Kismayu.

He said Gen. Morgan's harti sub-clan fighters were effectively kicked out of their main stronghold at Bulo Xaaji on Thursday.

But as they pulled back they took some prisoners, including Col. Ahmad Hashi, number two in Col. Jess's rival SPM wing.

He said Gen. Morgan was believed to be in the northwest Somali port of Bosaso seeking support from Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, self-styled "president" of the breakaway republic of Somaliland.

He said U.S. and Belgian

U.N. troops in Kismayu created calm last year until last October when the Belgian contingent blocked Col. Jess from taking on Gen. Morgan. The Belgian left Somalia in December.

The Kismayu area is currently held by a 1,200-strong Indian infantry battalion and a tank squadron equipped with T-72s and a Zimbabwean infantry company charged with holding the airport.

U.N. officers said their forces would avoid being sucked into the Kismayu inter-clan violence and would only act to defend themselves if they or aid agencies came under attack.

They said there were no plans to evacuate the U.N. troops.

Aid officials said the Kismayu power struggle was unrelated to a plague of bomb attacks and shooting against aid agencies in the towns of Belet Huen, Baidoa and Buale in the last three weeks.

They said those incidents and a bombing in Mogadishu a week ago were the work of Muslim fundamentalists but might provoke a crackdown from much larger factions such as Gen. Aideed's SNA.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Le Chateau Des Oliviers
18:00	News in French
19:30	Le Monde Fantastique Des Animaux
20:30	News in Arabic
21:30	The Respected Family
22:30	Wild Jack
23:30	The Cape Rebel
23:30	Night Court
PRAYER TIMES	
04:25	Fajr
06:25	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:50	Dhuhr
14:50	'Asr
17:34	Maghreb
18:42	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellfish, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 627875	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 634400	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 623366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541	

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 625543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 771331	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 625326	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 625932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulkin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
Temperatures will rise slightly and winds will be westerly moderate. In Amman, it will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	6 / 14
Aqaba	9 / 23
Deserts	4 / 16
Jordan Valley	10 / 22
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 22. Humidity readings:	

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 67 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.			
<b>USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS</b>	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	<b>HOSPITALS</b>	<b>FOR THE TRAVELLER</b>
<b>NIGHT DUTY</b>			<b>QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</b>
AMMAN:		AMMAN:	
Dr. Hanna Mansour	750197	Hussein Medical Centre	013181/1332
Dr. Nidal Al Mahari	751672	Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	642241/16
Dr. Salah Al Usud	649028	Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Dr. Khalil Al Zbali	740740	Abel Amman Maternity	642362
Firas pharmacy	661912	Masaka J. Amman	636140
Ferdows pharmacy	776336	Palestine Shmeisani	664171/4
Al Asma pharmacy	637055	Shemsani Hospital	669131
Nairokh pharmacy	623672	University Hospital	645845
Al Salam pharmacy	636730	Al-Mushar Hospital	667729/7
Yacoub pharmacy	644945	The Islamic, Adhafi	666127/57
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660	Al-Ahli, Adhafi	664164/6
Nairokh pharmacy	623672	Italian, Al-Mulajir	777101/3
Najih pharmacy	647632	Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
		Army, Marka	091611/15
		Queen Alia Hospital	086100
		Amal Hospital	674155
		ZARQA:	
		Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
		Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900550
		Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
		Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990
		IRBID:	
		Princess Basma Hospital	(02)255555
		Carolee Hospital	(02)772772
		Ibn Al Nafies Hospital	(02)247410
</			



## Premier, PSD head discuss security in the Kingdom

— The population of the Kingdom of Jordan is growing at a rate of 1.5 per cent annually, according to a study by the Jordanian Statistical Bureau. The study found that the population of the Kingdom in 1993 was 5,281,000, an increase from 5,198,000 in 1992. The study also found that the population of the Kingdom is growing at a rate of 1.5 per cent annually, which is higher than the world average of 1.2 per cent.

— The Jordanian Statistical Bureau has released a report on the population of the Kingdom for the year 1993. The report shows that the population of the Kingdom has increased by 83,000 people, or 1.5 per cent, compared to 1992. The report also shows that the population of the Kingdom is growing at a rate of 1.5 per cent annually, which is higher than the world average of 1.2 per cent.

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AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday called at the Public Security Department (PSD) to discuss with its director matters related to the department's requirements for ensuring the security of the country's internal and external borders.

Noting that the prime minister, who was accompanied by Interior Minister Salamah Hammad, had expressed confidence and support for the country's security services, pledging continued backing.

Also Monday, the prime minister and Mr. Hammad called at the Civil Status and Passports Department and met with its

director general, Nasouh Muhieddin, who outlined the department's newly adopted procedures to simplify work and speed up procedures.

The prime minister toured the department's section and inspected their functions and met with a number of citizens, discussing with them a number of matters related to the department's procedures.

Mr. Muhieddin outlined to the prime minister the benefits of registering national code number on the citizens' family books.



HRH Princess Basma

## School children, QAF collecting donations for the needy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Hundreds of boy scouts and girl guides along with students from government schools and community colleges Monday roamed the streets of Amman and other cities around the country with specially-marked boxes to collect donations for the poor.

The collection is part of a charity campaign during the month of Ramadan, spearheaded by the Queen Alia Fund of Social Development (QAF), to give financial and in-kind aid to the poor families or to finance their small-size, income-generating projects.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, who is honorary chairperson of QAF's Board of Trustees, inaugurated the campaign this month when she distributed relief aid to the needy families in the Mafrqa Governorate.

The Princess inspected the progress of the campaign which was underway Monday in Madaba, Marj Al Hamam and Abadi, watching their collection drive.

Later, she talked with the girl guides involved in collecting the donations, voicing her appreciation for their contributions to the charity campaign.

The Princess was accompanied by Minister of Education Khaleel Omari and other officials.

A QAF statement said that the campaign, the fourth of its kind this year, aims to confirm the Islamic concept of social solidarity within the Jordanian family, encourage self-reliance and improve the quality of life among the poor.

Upon announcing the campaign before the Ramadan month started, Princess Basma told a press gathering that this year the funds raised would mainly target three major areas of need: rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for heads of needy families, direct in-kind assistance to needy families suffering from malnutrition and poor health and financial aid to excellent underprivileged students so that they may pursue higher studies at colleges and universities.

With 45 centres around the country, dedicated to helping the needy, QAF realises the extent of poverty resulting from unemployment and other causes as well as the social and economic conditions of needy families, the Princess explained.

Noting that last year's campaign collected JD 40,000, the Princess expressed hope that this year's efforts would collect double last year's donations.

## Majali, Turkmen review UNRWA services to Palestinian refugees

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday discussed with visiting United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General Ilter Turkmen issues pertaining to the agency's services to the Palestinian refugees.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that issues of common concern to UNRWA and Jordan were reviewed mainly focusing on the agency's educational, health, environmental and infrastructure services to the residents of the refugee camps.

Dr. Majali voiced Jordan's appreciation of UNRWA's continued services to the refugees in the Kingdom and requested that they be upgraded in order to improve the refugees' living conditions.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr. Turkmen said that he explained to the prime minister the current situation in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, informing him about the agency's activities there and projects under way to improve the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA has allocated \$50 million to finance these development projects in the occupied Arab land, said Mr. Turkmen. He added that mat-



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali (second left), Monday confers with United Nations Relief and Works Agency Commissioner General Ilter Turkmen (second right) in the presence of Director of UNRWA in Jordan Dennis Brown (first right) and Minister of State Adel Irshaid (Petra photo).

ters related to the progress of the Arab-Israeli peace process were also discussed with Dr. Majali during the meeting.

Referring to his visit to Jordan, which started Monday, Mr. Turkmen said that it aims at conducting talks with the Jordanian government on matters pertaining to the Palestinian refugees and also at inspecting UNRWA's work in Jordan and the services it offers to the refugees with a view to improving them.

In reply to a question asked by the Jordan Television, Mr. Turkmen said that UNRWA currently faces financial problems affecting its budget and is

short of cash to cover recurrent health and educational expenses.

UNRWA is currently receiving large financial aid from donor countries, like the United States, the European Union nations and Japan, to finance projects in the wake of the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli accord in Washington last September. He said that so far the agency received pledges for \$60 million for these projects in the occupied territories.

Minister of State Adel Irshaid and UNRWA Director in Jordan Dennis Brown were present at the meeting with the

prime minister.

Mr. Turkmen, who arrived via the King Hussein Bridge, from the West Bank, is on a three-day visit to Jordan for talks on UNRWA affairs with government officials and Mr. Brown.

The question of pay increases for UNRWA staff in Jordan is expected to come up in the talks, according to official sources.

Mr. Irshaid, who last week had a meeting in Vienna with Mr. Turkmen, said in a newspaper interview this week that UNRWA staff in Jordan will receive a raise equivalent to 2.5 per cent of their salaries plus JD 15 retroactively, since the start of this year.

Representatives of staff committees had planned a sit-in at the agency's office last December but postponed action when Mr. Irshaid promised that he would discuss their grievances and their request for better pay with Mr. Turkmen.

Staff committees were reported as saying that they would try to meet with Mr. Turkmen during his current visit to discuss their demands.

According to Mr. Irshaid, UNRWA promised that it would purchase its needs for the refugees, particularly medicine, from the Jordanian markets.

## Bank employees strike for better conditions

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — More than 75 Middle East Investment Bank (MEIBANK) workers took to the streets for the third consecutive day, striking in demand for higher pay, equal to that of other employees in other banks, and a stop to arbitrary employee dismissal.

The protesters, part of the 130 employees who work at the 18 MEIBANK (former REFCO) branches in the Kingdom, presented a statement justifying their demands. "All we have heard from the bank's management were only promises, and they keep delaying accomplishing any of our demands," president of the Banks Union in Jordan, Heidar Rashid, told the Jordan Times.

He said the reason the employees decided to strike was that the employees could see through the management's schemes which, he claimed, aim to provoke employees in preparation for dismissing them from their jobs.

He said the employees presented a list of demands to the management for consideration. The demands, he maintained, include increasing employees' wages to meet the country's standards of living; establishing a committee, from the employees themselves, to organise the job promotion system; amending the health insurance system and looking after the employees' situation at their place of work and guaranteeing the employees their jobs.

Mr. Rashid claimed that the bank's management recently started hiring new employees and placed them in good position, paying them higher salaries.

"This is not fair," a bank



Middle East Investment Bank employees on strike at the bank's headquarters in Shmeisani (Photo by Rana Hussein).

employee who preferred not to be identified said.

"I have been working in the bank for nine years, and I am training a new employee who is getting paid twice the salary I am receiving," he said.

Another employee told the Jordan Times that the salary raise does not exceed 2 per cent a year, and that she had had a total JD 35 raise in 13 years.

"When I started working my monthly salary was JD 125; now I am getting JD 160," the woman said.

The employees accused the bank management of lack of objectivity in appointing new employees.

"I have been a head of department for the past 12 years and I get paid JD 210, and my fellow friend, who is also protesting with me, has been a branch director for the past 14 years and gets paid JD 140," the man said.

In March 1993, the Central Bank of Jordan granted a banking licence to the Real Estate Financing Corporation (REFCO), which was

established in 1965 as a public shareholder company, and it was converted into a fully fledged bank under its current name MEIBANK. It is a quoted public shareholding company licensed to handle a wide range of investment banking activities.

The bank General Director Qassem M. Qassem told the Jordan Times that a group of employees requested some changes, including improving their job situation, after REFCO's becoming a full bank, but "there are priorities the bank had to accomplish after the transition before looking into other issues."

"We had to study the overall conditions of the banking market in Jordan, because it was going to take some time, and we had to accomplish our goals before the end of the year," Mr. Qassem said.

"We held two meetings with the delegates of the Banks Union on Jan. 18 and Jan. 30 and we asked them for more time to enable the board to study their (employees) demands and re-

commendations," he said.

Mr. Qassem pointed out that 14 of the 18 branches have maintained their normal services despite the strike. He added that the bank did not dismiss a single bank employee, but was hiring more employees "because we are expanding."

Mr. Qassem said the board issued a third warning to the protesters, published in the newspapers, adding that according to the Labour Law, if employees do not report to work for three days, they are handed a warning to return to work and then, if they do not report to work for seven consecutive days without legitimate excuse, they can be dismissed from their jobs.

However, Mr. Rashid said the law stipulates that the employer cannot dismiss or punish any employee during the dispute period.

"We are not here to start any problem, we are just seeking our rights and a decent living," Mr. Rashid said. "We are going to maintain our strike until the board complies with our demands."

## Deputies 'intend to probe' funds diversion at Ministry of Education

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A number of deputies are planning to officially question Minister of Education Khaleel Omari over the diversion of funds from the ministry's budget for purchasing cars for education directors, parliamentary sources have said.

"The Lower House of the Jordanian Parliament intends to probe the matter further in the near future," as lawmakers are still being sent to the parliament by the government, sources said. The probe is expected to be carried out by the House of Representatives, which is currently in a state of emergency.

Dr. Omari had told law

makers, in response to questions by five deputies, that the amount was used for buying cars which will have a "positive effect" on the process of education and that the measure was essential for ministry officials to carry out their duties.

Dr. Omari said the diversion of funds from the students' contributions was prompted by the lack of funds at the ministry.

Deputy Abdel Raouf Rawabdeh rejected Dr. Omari's justification, saying that the ministry's action is "illegal and the use of contributions should be restricted to school equipment and building maintenance."

He added that students were not responsible for the ministry's lack of funds and that

the minister "cannot tax children on their education."

Mr. Jaber told the Jordan Times the minister had taken no action to reverse his decision and deputies would propose to Dr. Omari to consider the sum as a loan to be paid back, as it "rightfully belongs to students."

Mr. Jaber said that "we have not forgotten the issue," which was first raised in a session of the House a month ago. He said the delay in pursuing the matter was due to the House's preoccupation with debating the food and medicine situation in the country.

"Some ministers try to snatch away citizen's rights and we have to stop such violations," charged Mr. Jaber.

Upon announcing the campaign before the Ramadan month started, Princess Basma told a press gathering that this year the funds raised would mainly target three major areas of need: rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for heads of needy families, direct in-kind assistance to needy families suffering from malnutrition and poor health and financial aid to excellent underprivileged students so that they may pursue higher studies at colleges and universities.

With 45 centres around the country, dedicated to helping the needy, QAF realises the extent of poverty resulting from unemployment and other causes as well as the social and economic conditions of needy families, the Princess explained.

Noting that last year's campaign collected JD 40,000, the Princess expressed hope that this year's efforts would collect double last year's donations.

Dr. Anani reviewed with the Japanese official the latest developments in the peace process.

## Jordan, Japan to sign \$80m loan deal

AMMAN (J.T.) — The directed development projects at a meeting with Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz.

The minister voiced Jordan's appreciation to Japan for its continued aid to support Jordan's industrial, services and commercial sectors and the balance of payments over the past five years, in addition to its efforts to reduce the Kingdom's foreign debt burden.

The minister noted that among Jordan's development projects, those related to energy, irrigation, transport and communications take priority over others.

According to Mr. Endo, Japan and Jordan are expected to sign a \$80 million loan agreement next month to further help the country carry out development plans.

Mr. Endo earlier met Dr. Jawad Anani, minister of information, and was briefed on Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the Middle East conflict and its drive to attain a just and comprehensive peace.

Dr. Anani reviewed with the Japanese official the latest developments in the peace process.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### EXHIBITIONS

Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (6:30 p.m.-midnight).

Art exhibition entitled "Selections from the Artistic Works of Terra Sancta High School Students" at Amman National University (Salt Road).

Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.

Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fuheis (Tel. 720902).

Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)

Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfalli Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

### BOOK EXHIBITION

Book exhibition at the University of Jordan.

### DRAMA

Drama in Arabic entitled "Happened on a Theatre Day" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

### PIANO RECITAL

Piano recital by pianist Joanne Hutchison at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

### LECTURE

Lecture in Arabic entitled "International Pacts — A Historical Perspective Of Arab Heritage" by Dr. Mustafa Al Hyari at the Arab Thought Forum at 7:30 p.m.

## Fewer Iraqis seeking asylum through UNHCR in Amman

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The number of Iraqis seeking asylum abroad through a U.N. agency in Amman has dwindled to a trickle, but there was never any large number of Iraqis approaching the agency in the first place, for whatever reasons, according to a senior U.N. official.

Janvier de Riedmatten, chief of the Jordan mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said only around 5,000 Iraqis had approached the commission's office in Amman since the end of the Gulf war over Kuwait in March 1991.

The UNHCR found that most of the applicants were seeking asylum abroad because of economic hardships caused by the international sanctions against Iraq, he said.

"Most of them wanted to leave their country to make a better living outside," said Mr. de Riedmatten, noting

that such applicants fall outside the mandate of the UNHCR.

As such, Mr. de Riedmatten said, "less than 10 per cent of the applicants were granted refugee status (by the UNHCR) and the applications of others were turned down."

Most of those given refugee status — which entitles them to UNHCR help to find asylum in a third country and subsistence until they actually arrive in that country — have already left Jordan, he said.

"Only a few remain in Jordan," Mr. Riedmatten said, declining to be more specific or discuss any particular cases of political interest.

Most of the Iraqi refugees were accepted by the Scandinavian countries, "which were very generous," while others were also accepted by countries which have regular immigration programmes, such as Australia, the U.S. and Canada, he said.

Thousands of Iraqis used to come to Jordan every day in the first few months after Baghdad eased travel restrictions in May 1991. The flow ebbed as most foreign diplomatic missions imposed strict screening procedures or closed the door altogether for visa applicants of Iraqi passport holders.

Hundreds were struck in Jordan for months awaiting visas and immigration papers arranged by relatives and friends abroad before returning home.

The number of Iraqis travelling to Jordan trickled to a few dozen since early last year when the Baghdad government imposed a whopping 15,000 Iraqi dinars as travel tax. The average monthly income of an Iraqi was around 200 dinars before the war. It now stands at around 600 dinars.

The UNHCR maintains an office in Baghdad, but it does not handle Iraqi applicants since the agency's mandate stipulates that it would not handle applications from the nationals of the country

where it is based.

The Baghdad office of the agency looks mainly after Iranian refugees, some of whom had fled their country across the border and others left their homeland during the Iran-Iraq war.

A few thousand other Iraqis displaced during the Iranian revolution of 1979 also live in Iraq, but they are not under the care of any international relief agency.

Iranian sources say that many of them opted to remain in Iraq, particularly near the Shiite holy places in the country.

The UNHCR came in strength to Amman during the exodus of expatriates from Kuwait and Iraq through Jordan following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Since then, it has handled a few thousand cases of refugees of various countries of origin. The largest number of non-Iraqis was that of the Somalis. Five Somalis given

refugee status by the UNHCR remain in Jordan, Mr. de Riedmatten said.

The ongoing activities of the UNHCR in Jordan now focus on extending assistance to Bosnians who were stranded in Jordan in the face of hostilities in former Yugoslavia as well as those invited by the Jordanian government to stay here until the situation allows them to return home without fear.

More than 400 Bosnians were flown to Amman in mid-1993 as the government's guests under a programme organised by the Hashemite Charity Organisation in response to instructions by his Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

A few dozen of them have opted to return home, most of them after locating lost family members and relatives.

The UNHCR helps those officially hosted by the government by sharing part of

their accommodation costs, Mr. de Riedmatten said.

The agency also extends assistance to the Bosnians stranded in Jordan, he said, estimating their number at 180. Most of them are students and others who happened to be visiting Jordanian relatives. But the agency is not involved in finding alternate refuge for them in a third country except in a few cases where the applicants join their spouses or close family members outside Jordan.

"Resettlement is getting increasingly difficult these days, particularly after the conflicts in Eastern Europe," said Mr. de Riedmatten.

The quotas given to Middle Eastern refugees by countries that have a tradition of accepting refugees have been shrinking as a result of the shift of attention to victims of the strife in former Yugoslavia and other former East Bloc countries, he said.



By Rami G. Khouri

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
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## Putting out the fire once and for all

THE CONTROVERSY that was triggered by the clash between Deputy Toujan Faisal and her fellow Deputy Jamal Khreisha is not limited to Parliament. The implications of the clash between the two lawmakers affect the country as a whole. First and foremost, our people look to their representatives' interaction in Parliament as an example that should be followed and emulated by ordinary folks. But the unfortunate episode came as a shock to all of us who have unshaken faith in democracy.

His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly told his people that democracy begins with the self and cannot be imposed. If Jordanians cannot conduct themselves in the spirit of democracy, and elected parliament members at that, then there is a pressing need to change behavioural attitudes of those who are not ready to shoulder their democratic responsibilities.

Now that this problem has reared its ugly head, Parliament should contain it and seek an equitable solution for it. It is a fact of life that such occurrences sometimes happen in the most advanced nations of the world, but the shocking part about Saturday's incident lies in the fact that we in Jordan are not accustomed to such smear attacks, especially between members of Parliament. The speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament should convene an emergency session to deal with the crisis with a view to preventing any repetition of such incidents. This could be done by putting into effect new norms governing parliamentary debates. One thought comes to mind in this direction. Whenever a new member of Parliament takes the oath of office he or she would be called upon to make a solemn pledge not to abuse their parliamentary privileges and safeguarding the dignity of their function. Other measures could also be introduced with a view to preventing similar clashes. The eyes of Jordanians are focused on the Faisal-Khreisha standoff and they expect its resolution within the confines of Parliament. Taking the issue to court would do ill-service to the legislative branch of government by showing that our elected representatives are incapable of handling their own affairs. It is the prime responsibility of Parliament to put their own house in order. We expect them to do just that.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday described the PLO-Israeli agreement signed in Cairo recently as a deal between Israel and itself, totally excluding the PLO and disregarding the rights and interests of the Palestinian people. Fahd Al Faneh said that the deal was tantamount to a consent by the PLO to Israel's occupation and continued hegemony over Palestinian affairs. Through the Cairo deal, Israel has secured everything, while the Palestinians got nothing at all, said the writer. Shimon Peres told Israeli Television after the agreement was signed that Israel's interests were safeguarded, noting that the deal ensured continued Israeli security prerogatives and at the same time saved the Israeli government the task of handling the affairs of people considered alien to Israeli society and living as intruders on Israeli land, said Faneh. He said that the Arab masses, who had thought that the declaration of principles concluded in Oslo would pave the ground for the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state in five years, are now disillusioned and frustrated, he said. Indeed we all have to admit that the deal involved only one party: Israel, because it aims at achieving the goals of the Jewish state one hundred per cent and grant the Palestinians no rights at all, added the writer. Should the Arafat-Peres deal signed in Cairo serve as a... for future deals between the Arabs and Israel, said the writer, then it would be far better for the occupation to continue because then it opens the door for the Arab people to openly resist it and carry on the struggle for freedom.

A COLUMNIST in Al Bustour praised Qatar television for presenting a programme that highlights the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the U.N. sanctions. It is a brave step on the part of the Qatari government that should be repeated by other governments to help lift the sanctions and end the sufferings of the Iraqi people, said Mohammad Kawash. The writer said such courageous steps can help propagate the idea among Arab masses about the need for ending Arab sanctions and also for reestablishing solidarity among the Arab states which he said, face a common fate. The embargo on Iraq, said the writer, is by no means related to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, which has long ended. Rather it is an American punishment imposed on the Iraqi people and, unfortunately, backfired by the so-called international legitimacy. Furthermore, the sanctions on Iraq are causing considerable damage to the Jordanian economy for no reason. The sanctions and the siege on Ajlaja have nothing to do with the embargo. On Iraq, and it is regrettable to see the world community doing nothing to help end this injustice to Jordan, continued the writer. He said it has been customary for Jordan to take up the subject of the siege. Aqaba with every guest, including the French foreign minister, and the U.S. secretary of state who, the writer said, has reassured Jordan that the U.S. will look into the Kingdom's grievance.

## The View from Fourth Circle

## Sunshine and thunder, in 1989 and 1994

Poverty and water are probably the two most serious medium-term threats to stability and progress in Jordan and the rest of the Arab region, and they both deserve far more rigorous, urgent and extensive attention than they are getting today.

To our credit, the poverty issue has been openly discussed at the highest level of government for many years, ever since it emerged as a growing problem in the mid-1980s. Poverty became a major nationwide threat in the period 1988-1991, following the cumulative impact of: a) the collapse of the foreign exchange value of the dinar in mid-1988, b) the introduction of the economic adjustment programme in early 1989, c) the 1990 Gulf crisis, and d) the 1991 Gulf war and repatriation of perhaps over 300,000 Jordanian nationals from the Gulf.

The government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international development partners have carried out several studies recently to document the extent and causes of poverty. Credible surveys by the Statistics Department indicate that the percentage of families living under the poverty line doubled in the decade of the 1980s, from around 10 per cent to a high of 21 per cent in 1992. (The poverty line was defined as a monthly family income of JD 89 in 1989, and absolute poverty was JD 41; in 1992-93, the poverty line was JD 119 for a family that paid rent and JD 97 for a family that did not pay rent, and absolute poverty was JD 61).

The situation improved somewhat by 1993, as the Jordanian economy resumed growth and new jobs reduced the unemployment rate. After the government increased salaries for civil servants, the Statistics Department survey showed that 18.3 per cent of families lived below the poverty line in 1993. While this figure is about the same as the poverty level in 1989, the more serious indicator is that the percentage of families living in absolute poverty increased from 1.5 per cent in 1989 to 5.3 per cent in 1993.

Given that the average size of poor families is nine persons per family (compared to 6.4 persons per non-poor families), and given that we have an estimated 120,000 poor families, the total number of people living in poverty in Jordan today is just over one million, of whom over 250,000 persons live in absolute poverty. Not only do we have a relatively large poor class, we also have a growing class of abjectly poor families that are unable to cope in our urban, wage labour, consumer-oriented economy.

There are also serious signs that we may be accepting relatively large-scale poverty as a permanent if vexing reality. It has become common today to see poor people making the rounds of garbage cans in front of homes in better off parts of our large cities and towns; businesses and private homes are routinely approached by indigent persons seeking money, work, or a sense of hope that they can care for their children and families. Theft, crime and dishonesty in businesses are on the rise. Poverty is no longer a shocking novelty; it has become a routine feature of our landscape.

The government and the people of Jordan as a whole are aware of the poverty problem, and we can take pride in the many public and private sector efforts to alleviate the suffering of poor families. At the request of the prime minister, a multi-disciplinary government committee is now formulating a strategy to alleviate poverty. This important work is being personally directed by the Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour and it deserves widespread public discussion to assure that an effective strategy is formulated to come to grips with the heart of the problem. It is to Dr. Sqour's and the government's credit that this strategy is being discussed already among a wide cross-section of Jordanians.

**"Allowing nearly one-fifth of Jordanian families and nearly one-fourth of Jordanian individuals to remain mired in a perpetual cycle of poverty and despair will provide fertile breeding grounds for social tension and political extremism."**

Reducing poverty is likely to require hard political and economic decisions that will reflect a fundamental change in our national economic and political values. To address the needs of a million or more poor people, we may have to deal with such tough issues as redirecting our health and education expenditures away from higher education and hospital-based tertiary health care, towards primary/basic education, literacy training, and primary health care. Powerful vested interests will oppose such strategic shifts for two reasons: they can make a lot of money from the system's current priorities, and the poor are not organised into a political constituency that can impact on the existing power structure. Yet, the current situation is loaded with social and political dynamite.

Allowing nearly one-fifth of Jordanian families and nearly one-fourth of Jordanian individuals to remain mired in a perpetual cycle of poverty and despair will provide fertile breeding grounds for social tension and political extremism — especially if the suffering of the poor remains extensive or increases, and if the poor are not given the priority they deserve by a political power structure that might feel it can discount them as an invisible community with no political strength.

The economy is unlikely to provide enough new jobs to meet demand among the unemployed and the new entrants to the labour market in the years to come. The economy also remains delicately balanced between dependence and sustainable growth, deeply vulnerable to external factors of aid, trade and political sentiments that can quickly result in higher

unemployment and poverty.

Our experience in April 1989 should remind us always of what reasonable people will do when economic pressures place them and their families in a difficult situation. We can also learn from their recent history of other Arab countries where mass suffering and political marginalisation resulted in severe domestic tension, notably Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, Somalia and Egypt. We are unlikely to reach such a catastrophic stage in Jordan, given our many national assets. But, in the 1970s and early 1980s we also thought we would never suffer a foreign debt problem or unemployment and poverty rates that hovered around 20 per cent for years on end.

If we have to make hard choices and implement tough new policies to make sure that one in every four Jordanians does not get relegated to the ranks of what some people are already calling the Fourth World — the perpetually powerless and effectively disenfranchised poor who know only suffering and who can look forward only to despair — we have to generate a genuine national consensus on the steps to be taken.

The government and NGOs have taken the lead in this respect in assisting the poor and identifying what needs to be done for a long-term solution. Now it is time for the public as a whole to share in the decisions that will have to be made in the coming few years. This cannot be done only by a perfunctory parliamentary debate or a superficial airing of the problem on the establishment media. It needs a clear presentation of the extent of the problem, its consequences and the nature of the sacrifices that all of us must make to pull our poor compatriots out of their poverty trap.

Parliamentary committees would do well to hold public hearings on the matter, which the state-owned media could televise in full, without discretionary and politically correct editing. We would look quite foolish to hide the reality of poverty today under a media figleaf of good news and sunshine, for we would be repeating the same serious mistakes we made in 1988-89 when our media did not adequately address the issues of foreign debt and the exchange value of the dinar.

Schools, universities and community clubs and other local groups have a role to play in discussing poverty. Most importantly, the power structure must gain a more comprehensive understanding of the real nature and pain of poverty, and the poor themselves must be given access to the political decision-making structure. If the public, the political establishment and the poor all join forces in a policy-formulation effort that honours Jordan's modern legacy of compassion and comprehensive human development, we will have a chance to implement an effective national anti-poverty strategy based on an accurate psychological, sociological and political reading of poverty in Jordan. If not, we will have nobody to blame but ourselves if and when today's sunshine is swept aside by tomorrow's thunder and lightning.

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## Peace process back on top of Syria's agenda

By G.H. Jansen

DAMASCUS — Now that the tragic death in a car crash of Major Basil Al Assad, the eldest son and heir apparent of President Hafez Al Assad, has been mourned and a consensus on who will ultimately succeed the president seems to have developed, Syria can get back to its main preoccupation, the peace process with Israel.

On the streets of Damascus, one can still see black mourning flags and long black streamers hanging down the facades of buildings while tens of thousands of pictures of Basil are on almost every wall. Although Basil was not a real candidate to succeed his father because at 32 he was eight years too young for the post, his death revealed that for at least five and perhaps 10 years, he was being groomed for leadership through service in the army and as his father's personal assistant, during which time he performed delicate negotiations in Lebanon.

Three weeks after his death, a consensus on what the succession will be has emerged. It is expected that there will be no one leader after President Assad but a collective leadership of, perhaps, three persons (because a triumvirate is more stable than a duumvirate) while the primus inter pares, eventually, will most probably be Abdel Halim Khaddam, presently the first vice president and for many years the forceful foreign minister and Syrian viceroy for Lebanon. But since Mr. Khaddam is a Sunni Muslim, he would require the backing of the real holders of power, a group of generals belonging to the Alawite minority, who, though only 11 per cent of the population, have been the overlords in Syria for over two decades.

The succession question out of the way, for the time being, Syrian attention switched back to the other major preoccupation, peace with Israel. This, too, has been clarified and by none other than the main Israeli negotiator with Syria, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who on Feb. 11, said that "there was no chance of an Israeli-Syrian agreement" — which is true — in the present format of their talks — which is untrue. There is nothing wrong with the bilateral format except for the fact that in the talks an irresistible force, Syrian determination, has come up against an immovable object, Israel's intransigence: Syria has not budged

an inch from its well-established position that Israel must vacate the whole of the occupied Golan Heights — no return, no peace — and Israel will not budge an inch in refusing to return the Golan, only at best the smaller portion of it.

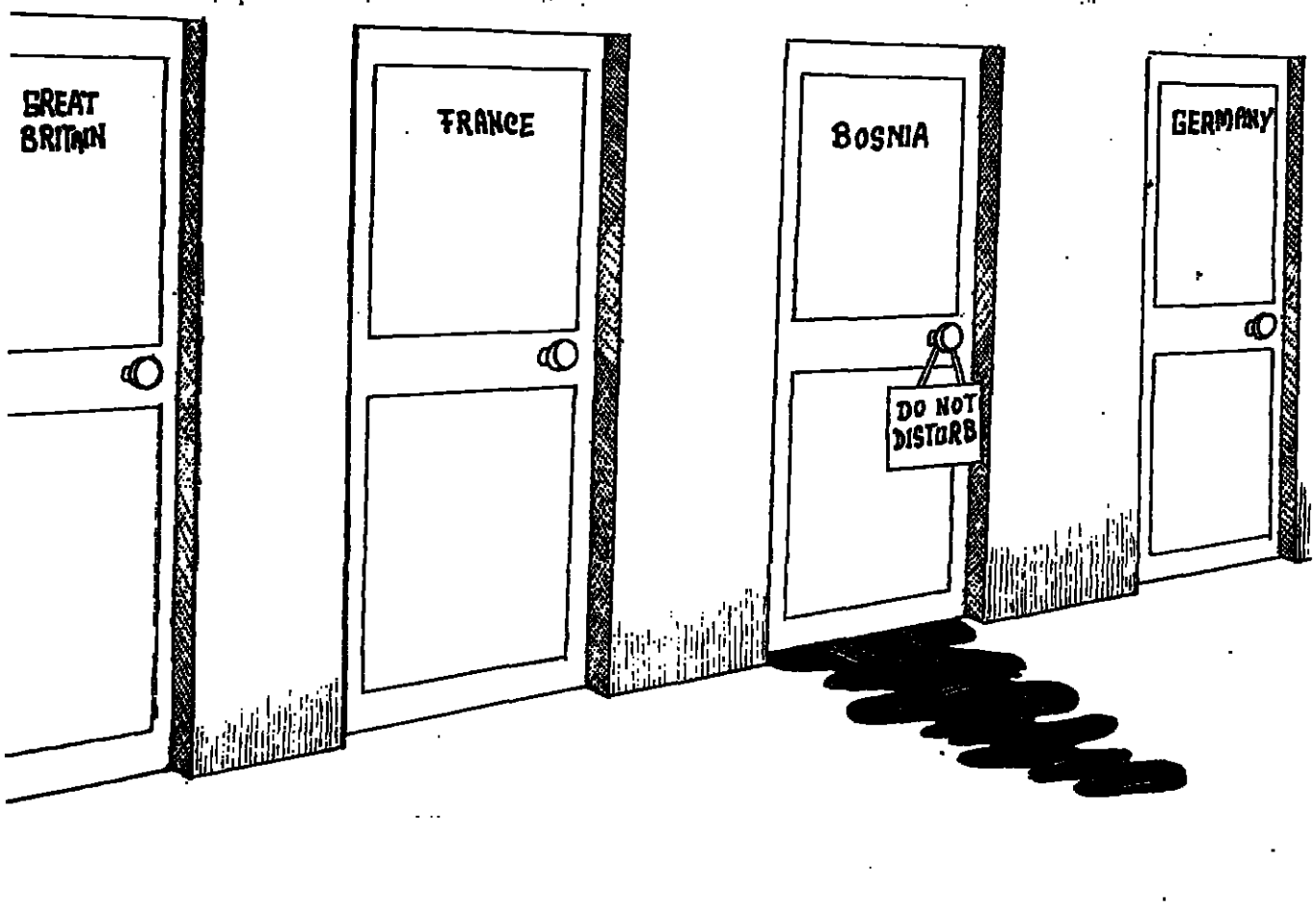
The Syrians have almost reached the point of accepting that the Israelis are never going to concede on the Golan. The Syrians will accept this position because they will have no choice. But Israel will not get the peace which it says it wants: "The Arabs cannot make war without Egypt and cannot make peace without Syria." For how long more would Syria be prepared to go on with the present fruitless exercise? — Perhaps another half year.

A recent display of Israel's stubborn arrogance has further convinced the Syrians that that is what is going to happen. They noted the way in which the Israelis slapped their great and good friend U.S. President Bill Clinton in the face when they rubbished his claim that Syrian clarifications at the Geneva summit of what Syria meant by full peace and normalisation were "new" and "very important", which is exactly so. And having been slapped, Mr. Clinton, like a good Christian, turned the other cheek, when a few days ago, his secretary of state announced officially that the U.S. was not going to pressure Israel on withdrawing from the Golan.

But because the Israelis, like that other difficult and dangerous people, the Serbs, only make concessions when under pressure, where is the pressure on Israel going to come from when the U.S. has opted out? Perhaps from the Palestinian people in the occupied territories who, individually, are killing individual Israelis on an almost daily basis. That would explain why Damascus is the headquarters of no less than 10 "rejectionist" Palestinian groups which oppose the peace process and particularly the Oslo accord. It would also explain why Damascus refuses to curb the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, which maintains pressure on Israeli forces occupying parts of southern Lebanon. The message from Damascus is clear: If there is no peace, there will be an Arab war of attrition against Israel in occupied Arab territories.

The writer is a Cyprus-based journalist specialised in Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs.

M. KAHIL



## Bosnia tests NATO's credibility

By Nicholas Doughty  
Reuters

ROME — As the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) prepares to launch the first combat action in its 45-year history from air bases in Italy, much more is at stake than whether allied warplanes can hit Serb artillery positions around Sarajevo.

For the 16-nation western alliance, which won the cold war without having to fire a shot, the question is whether the use of force will now restore its tattered credibility or whether it will mark a decisive stage in NATO's decline.

"Failure to live up to this undertaking would extract an extremely high price," Italian Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreotta said in a newspaper interview published on Sunday.

"It would call into question NATO's credibility way beyond the Bosnian issue," NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner is fond of boasting that the alliance has never failed and that it will play a vital role in these turbulent times, helping to deal with other Yugoslavia-style conflicts in Europe.

**"For the 16-nation Western alliance, which won the cold war without having to fire a shot, the question is whether the use of force will now restore its tattered credibility or whether it will mark a decisive stage in NATO's decline."**

As the world's only surviving military alliance, NATO is preparing for joint peacekeeping missions with its former Communist foes in Eastern Europe. Many of them are hopeful they will be able to join the alliance soon.

"If we do it right in Bosnia, we will establish our credibility for good with these people," said one alliance diplomat in Brussels.

"Those who would use force to achieve their aims anywhere else in Europe would get a very

clear signal that NATO is able to act when the circumstances require."

It may be NATO's last chance to prove that point. The alliance threatened last August to use force to break the siege of Sarajevo but no

wrong for NATO.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has to give the green light for the first air strike and could, at least in theory, block alliance action after the deadline expires.

NATO diplomats said this was unlikely because the United States and other Western nations would bring enormous pressure to bear on him if he refused.

But the more worrying prospect is that NATO will, as a result of air strikes, be dragged into a war that it cannot win and when will have enormous human and financial costs — in short, that the alliance will fail in its first combat action.

The main concern is that air strikes will bring retaliation against lightly-armed U.N. troops or relief workers delivering aid in Bosnia.

NATO planes are ready to protect them but, without putting extra combat troops into Bosnia, that protection is limited. The Western allies are not prepared to send in ground forces.

"Air power can achieve only so much on its own," said one NATO military official. "Let's hope we are successful."

thing came of it. NATO officials blamed the United Nations for failing to order the planes in but the alliance lost face nonetheless.

This time, NATO has given the Serbs a 10-day deadline for them to withdraw artillery and other heavy weapons from the hills around Sarajevo or put them under U.N. control.

If not, they will face air strikes when the deadline expires in one week's time.

But there are two ways in which the operation could go







## British exports to Arab Gulf states rise by 14.3%

TODAY IS NEW YEAR! ALL I WANT IS TAKE YOUR GIRL, ENCEE-OUT!

ALL I GOT IS A NICKEL! WITH WHICH I'M GONNA CALL HER UP! MAYBE SHE'LL INVITE ME OVER TO HER HOUSE

HELLO, MONEY! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HELLO, DARLING! HAPPY NEW!

OH, I'M FINE! NOW ARE YOU SUGAR?

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MY SWEET?

OH, I'M SO LONESOME FOR YOU, PRECIOUS! I MISS YOU SO MUCH!

OH, YOU POOR DEAR!

LISTEN, ENCEE! MAY I COME OVER TO SEE YOU TONIGHT?

SURE, HARRY! COME ON OVER!

HARRY? THIS AIN'T HARRY!

CLICK!

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# THE Daily Crossword

by Henry Sachtander

## ACROSS

- 1 Lima's land
- 5 Clean, in a way
- 9 Proto or cyto  
follower
- 14 Like — of bricks
- 15 Uncurious
- 16 Region of  
ancient Greece
- 17 London  
landmark
- 20 Doddering
- 21 Senses
- 22 Sallet fish
- 24 Ogles
- 25 Corporate  
letters
- 28 Frans
- 30 Veves
- 34 City dweller
- 38 Holy one
- 37 Mysterious  
Atlantic area
- 40 Gird one's —
- 41 Red ore
- 42 Mashed sweets  
moist word
- 43 Spint
- 44 Yang's opposite
- 45 Actress  
Thompson
- 48 Rotisserie  
feast
- 50 Radiation  
detectors, for  
short
- 53 Sufficient
- 57 Certain line  
around a globe
- 58 Meteorite
- 60 Correct copy
- 61 Defamatory  
remark
- 62 Origins
- 63 Gunge the motor
- 64 Dobbin a fare

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## DOWN

- 2 Ed
- 3 "Kookoo" —
- 6 Ph of anger
- 10 Pelican Satch
- 11 Med. sch. subj.
- 12 Letter, on top
- 13 A West
- 14 Graduates
- 19 Piggery
- 20 Architectural  
ner
- 25 Russian money
- 26 King of Thebes
- 27 Oupoue
- 29 Sailboat
- 31 Gymnast Cathy
- 32 Chou —
- 33 Hirsch
- 36 Those suffering  
memory loss
- 37 "The Great" —  
(Duvall film)
- 38 Rivers: So.
- 39 Examines
- 43 Carefully  
studying
- 44 support

## Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

- 48 Concur
- 47 Winter mo.
- 49 Trunk
- 50 Grow
- 51 Sewing case
- 52 Faction

- 54 Campus letters
- 55 Surf
- 56 Towel word
- 57 — (usually)
- 58 104







## Zulu king lays claim to kingdom

DURBAN. South Africa (AFP) — Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini laid claim Monday to the sovereignty of the Zulu kingdom as it existed in 1834, before it was conquered by the British.

He told tens of thousands of spear-wielding supporters at a rally here before meeting South African President F.W. De Klerk that negotiations had failed to secure a just future for the Zulu nation and that he had "come to the end of the road."

It will be the third meeting in a month between the two men to discuss the future of the Zulu kingdom under a new post-election constitution rejected by King Zwelithini and KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

According to a copy of a memorandum to be presented to Mr. De Klerk obtained by AFP before the meeting, King Zwelithini said he was preparing "to promulgate the constitution of KwaZulu and Natal which will establish a monarchy modelled after the best examples of democratic and pluralistic monarchies in the world."

By the pre-1834 boundaries the king is understood to mean a territory of some eight million people, including six million Zulus, stretching from the Drakensberg Mountains in the west of the Indian Ocean in the east.

The king tells De Klerk in

the memorandum "the time has come for difficult and irrevocable decisions," and challenges him with the options of choosing "the path of liberation" or allowing "our opponents to attempt to crush my kingdom and the freedom and liberation of my people by means of violence and destruction."

The king's public demand for sovereignty comes two days after Saturday's decision by the IFP, along with the Bophuthatswana black homeland and the right-wing Afrikaner Volksfront which form the Freedom Alliance, to boycott South Africa's first all-race elections on April 26 to 28.

The elections are expected to be won by the IFP's arch-rival Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), which has secured a strong central government in a new constitution against Inkatha's demand for regional powers.

The ANC has accused Mr. Buthelezi of manipulating King Zwelithini for his own ends, but the monarch made it clear in his speech to his supporters Monday that he was firmly on Mr. Buthelezi's side, saying he knows of "no Zulu more bold and true."

Announcing its decision to boycott the polls Saturday, hours before Saturday's deadline, the IFP said international mediation was needed to "pull South Africa from the brink of disaster."

The government and the ANC have rejected the demand, but Mr. De Klerk has said the door is still open for a possible last minute deal which would bring the IFP into the elections.

In Cape Town, shortly before leaving for Durban, Mr. De Klerk said the alliance's decision to boycott the poll was a "serious problem" but ruled out postponing the election date.

He told the opening session of an International Press Institute (IPI) conference that his government would "continue to do everything we can to address their reasonable concerns, but we will not allow them to thwart the determination of the overwhelming majority of South Africans to proceed with the election."

Mr. Buthelezi warned Sunday that his party's boycott was likely to bring "casualties and even death."

According to a recent independent poll, the ANC enjoys 51 per cent support in KwaZulu and surrounding Natal, against 23 per cent for the IFP.

"Changing the date is not on the agenda," Mr. De Klerk said in a speech before hundreds of journalists attending IPI's general congress.

He said his government would continue to negotiate with the conservative freedom alliance "but we will not allow them to thwart the determination of the overwhelming

majority of South Africans to proceed with the elections."

Alliance leaders say the government and the African National Congress (ANC) have not gone far enough to satisfy their federalist ambitions, especially white extremists' demands for a whites-only homeland.

The AVF has threatened to actively disrupt voting, a threat echoed by IFP lead Mangosuthu Buthelezi Sunday.

But Mr. De Klerk said Monday that his government would deal "firmly and decisively" with any attempts to undermine the polls.

"What we cannot accept is a return in any form to racial discrimination and minority ethnic domination," he said.

ANC leader Nelson Mandela, also addressing the Congress, echoed Mr. De Klerk's commitment to the April 26-28 poll, saying that "those who want to delay the birth of a democracy assume an awesome responsibility and should be aware of the terrible risks their actions entail."

He said the new leadership's goal should be to "rebuild" South Africa on the ruins of apartheid, which has burdened the country "with scandalous levels of poverty which translates into 17 million people — all blacks — existing below the minimum living level."

Mr. Mandela said that one of the main priorities of an ANC-led government would be to create jobs.



## Aid flights resume in Angola

LISBON (AP) — Angola's UNITA rebels opened the besieged city of Cuito to emergency food flights for the first time in a week Monday, but closed a second desperate city with a storm of artillery when U.S. Senate fact-finders tried to visit.

Under intense U.N. and U.S. pressure, UNITA agreed not to fire on airlifts to Cuito and other government cities while the government in turn lifted a ban on aid to rebel-held areas, a relief official said.

The airlifts were halted a week ago when a four-month unofficial ceasefire collapsed and fierce artillery battles broke out throughout the central highlands.

"This deal couldn't have come much later for those people to survive," said the relief worker of the 60,000 Angolans trapped in Cuito, 670 kilometres (415 miles) south-east of Luanda, which has been surrounded by rebel forces for more than a year.

The government estimates rebel shells killed 300 people in Cuito in four days. UNITA said more than 100 were killed by a government bombing of neighbouring rebel-held Huambo, once Angola's second-largest city.

But relief flights to Malange, one of the cities hardest-hit by Angola's war-caused famine, were scratched when the rebels suddenly unleashed a dawn artillery bombardment.

Although given rebel safety guarantees to land, three members of a U.S. Senate staff delegation had to cancel a visit to Malange when rebel artillery pounded the airfield hours before they were to arrive, an embassy official said.

This is the second time UNITA has aborted a trip by congressional investigators to the besieged city 350 kilometres (415 miles) south-east of Luanda. In December, four members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee were in flight to Malange when rebel artillery began pounding the airfield.

"We don't think this is by chance," said a Western diplomat, speaking anonymously in accordance with ministry policy. "UNITA apparently doesn't want to see how bad things are in Angola."

## Seoul sees positive signs from North about nuclear impasse

SEOUL (AFP) — There are signs that North Korea will reverse its refusal to allow outside inspections of its nuclear facilities, South Korea's president said Monday, as Russian scientists revealed that Pyongyang has developed a nuclear bomb.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam told Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa by hotline, that he was hopeful that Pyongyang would agree to the inspections. Mr. Kim's spokesman, Choo Don-Shik said.

However, Mr. Kim said, the North Korean nuclear programme "has reached a critical point with only a week to go to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting," according to Mr. Choo.

Pyongyang has developed a nuclear bomb with the help of Russian nuclear experts, Japan's Jiji Press reported Monday.

Russian researchers told Jiji that the former Soviet Union was engaged in a joint plan with North Korea to build a nuclear bomb until 1985, and Russian scientists continue to provide clandestine assistance to Pyongyang.

But South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sang-Joo said Monday in Ottawa that the toning down of bellicose rhetoric by North Korea over the weekend was "a significant change."

North Korea said over the weekend that Washington had recently told Pyongyang that it wanted to resolve the nuclear issue through dialogue, and that Pyongyang also wanted a peaceful solution.

Both South Korea and Japan feared that Pyongyang could go to war if backed into a corner, and Mr. Han has urged caution on the imposition of sanctions.

North Korea has said it would consider the imposition of "punitive measures" and an act of war.

They also indicated they would seek phased rather than immediate wholesale sanctions against North Korea if the issue were referred to the Security Council.

Mr. Hosokawa told Mr. Kim that U.S. President Bill Clinton "shared the same views" on the matter, Mr. Choo said.

The Japanese prime minister also said, "close consultations should be held between South Korea and Japan" on the inspections impasse, the spokesman added.

At the Feb. 21 meeting in Vienna the IAEA is expected to decide whether to refer North Korea's refusal to allow outside inspections of suspected nuclear sites to the U.N. Security Council for sanctions.

North Korea has demanded that the IAEA lower its inspection requirements.

"North Korea is expected to show a positive response (regarding nuclear verification inspections) in the coming days," Mr. Han said.

"There is a high possibility that North Korea would resume working-level contacts with the United States in New York this week and convey its willingness (to accept the inspections)," Mr. Han said.

The South Korean News Agency Yonhap cited government sources as saying that Washington and Pyongyang would reopen contact this week.

Yonhap also said that during recent back-door contacts, Washington had reassured Pyongyang of the resumption of high-level talks on improving ties, if North Korea allowed the full inspection of its nuclear sites.

Mr. Han was in Ottawa after a rush visit to Washington where he and U.S. officials agreed to try to pursue a peaceful resolution of the nuclear impasse up to the last minute.

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The Japanese prime minister also said, "close consultations should be held between South Korea and Japan" on the inspections impasse, the spokesman added.

## Tougher sanctions against Haiti readied

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and three other nations plan a new series of tougher sanctions to force democracy on the poor Caribbean nation, a Clinton administration official said.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright said on NBC's Meet The Press programme that the United States, France, Canada and Venezuela were preparing this week to promote a package of tighter sanctions against

Haiti.

"We are looking again at a tougher set of sanctions which really has three parts to it, has to do with air travel, targeted sanctions against certain parties there and an overall trade embargo," she said.

"We are in the process of negotiating it," she said.

Human rights activists last week urged President Bill Clinton to raise pressure on Haiti's military regime to step down by barring U.S. imports of all

goods assembled in Haitian plants.

They told reporters that more than 50 U.S. firms bring into the United States a variety of goods assembled in Haiti, including baseballs, clothing, floor tiles and fishing lures.

They said a United Nations embargo on fuel and weapons shipments to Haiti was leaking badly, harming Haiti's poor but not the military leaders it was intended to force from office.

## Sri Lanka rejects rebel peace overtures

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe Monday rejected peace overtures from a junior rebel and insisted that any serious effort to end the bloodshed must come from the Tamil Tiger chieftain.

A local leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had asked the Colombo government last week to "create conditions to establishing peace" in the embattled northeast where the rebels are fighting for a separate state.

In the first reaction to the offer made by an LTTE official known as Karikalan, the prime minister said that rebel supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, 39, must be directly involved in any new peace effort.

"Any response from the LTTE must come from

Prabhakaran. We have not closed the door for peace. But Prabhakaran is silent," Mr. Wickremesinghe told a public rally in central Kottale region Sunday.

He said 14 months of talks with the LTTE ended in failure in June 1990, leading to more bloodshed, and he added that after that debacle all political parties agreed that Mr. Prabhakaran must be directly involved with any talks.

"No political party has changed that position. We do not want to discourage anyone from talking. But any serious move must come from Prabhakaran himself and no one else in the LTTE," Mr. Wickremesinghe told AFP Monday.

The latest LTTE peace bid was conveyed to the government by A.T. Ariyaratna, a

leader of a non-governmental organisation, who visited LTTE-held Jaffna peninsula.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed two truckloads of Tamil rebels outside a key northern military base, causing "heavy casualties," hours after troops destroyed a guerrilla camp elsewhere, officials said Monday.

Ground attack aircraft bombed the two vehicles carrying Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels Sunday near the forward defence lines of the Palaly military base, a spokesman said.

The strategic base in the LTTE-controlled northern Jaffna peninsula has frequently come under LTTE fire, but troops manning the forward defences have also killed dozens of rebel infiltrators.

## Cambodia threatens rebels with more force

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh has warned extremist Khmer Rouge guerrillas to join in efforts at national reconciliation or face outlaw status and renewed government military action.

The Khmer Rouge should rejoin the national community and "put an end to the suffering of the people and your families," Prince Ranariddh said in a televised speech Sunday.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas should return to lead a "legitimate life with your families" or face a life as outlaws, he said.

"Please do not be reluctant any more. Even though you are being scattered from battlefields like Anlong Veng — other (guerrilla) bases will also receive the same fate as Anlong Veng," he said in a 20-minute broadcast.

"Please return to your homeland and join with your families in time for the approaching Khmer New Year (in April)."

Remote Anlong Veng, 310 kilometres northwest of

Phnom Penh, was the Khmer Rouge's main northern headquarters until it was captured by the government Feb. 5.

The Khmer Rouge is the only political faction refusing to implement the U.N.-brokered 1991 Paris peace agreement that formally ended 13 years of civil war and paved the way for last May's national elections.

The government has offered the rebels cabinet positions in exchange for an immediate ceasefire, an opening of its zones and demobilisation of its estimated 8,000-strong guerrilla force.

But nominal Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan has rejected the offer and political negotiations have since remained deadlocked.

In recent months the Maoist-inspired rebels, responsible for the deaths of one million Cambodians during a reign of terror in the 1970s, have suffered a string of military setbacks and a rash of defections.

A key Khmer Rouge communications and logistics base in northwest Phum Chhat was captured last August, and a second logistics base at Kraya

in central Kompong Thom province was captured in December.

Sporadic fighting has reportedly continued near Anlong Veng, a former district seat, as 2,000 government soldiers complete mopping up operations. Defence Minister General Tea Banh said.

"Now we are controlling the Anlong Veng area, but Khmer Rouge guerrillas scattered from the battlefield have set up small groups to continue hit and run attacks on our forces — this is no problem for us," General Tea Banh told Reuters Monday.

He said land access to Anlong Veng was being hindered by unexploded land mines laid by the Khmer Rouge defectors.

Government spokesman Sieng La Presse earlier said the Khmer Rouge had fled the base rather than fight a major battle.

Small units of guerrillas had retreated north towards the Thai border and were continuing to shell their former base, killing 20 government soldiers and wounding 82, he said.

## Near naked samba dancers kick off Rio carnival

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Barechested men and women wearing only minuscule loincloths gyrated to the rhythms of samba astride a giant float Sunday night as Rio de Janeiro's glittering carnival parade got underway. The parade competition, which lasts until dawn and continues Monday night, is the highlight of Rio's pre-Lenten carnival, which began last Thursday and ends on Ash Wednesday. The Unidos De Ponte school kicked off the annual tradition with a tribute to one of Brazil's most beloved samba singers, Alcione, the most eagerly awaited school this year was Mangueira, which was to march early Monday morning. The school, traditionally the city's most popular, will pay tribute to four of Brazil's best-known singers — Caetano Veloso, his sister Maria Bethania, Gilson to Gil and Gal Costa. The foursome spearheaded the 1960s tropicalism movement of music popularised around the world. Brazilian President F. Franco came to see and hear Mangueira, marking the first time a president attended the parade at the nearly mile (kilometre)-long Sambadrome. The schools this year have promised to put on a show as luxurious as ever, even though the gambling bosses who bankroll most of the schools are behind bars.

Sen. McCain made his comments on the CNN programme Late Edition. Defence Department officials say former President George Bush began removing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991 and that none currently remain.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn said Sunday that it was time for the United States to "start planning and discussing sanctions" against the North.

Sen. Nunn, a Georgia Democrat who also appeared on "Late Edition," said the United States should be working to ensure that China, an historic North Korean ally, would go along with sanctions in the U.N. Security Council.

In a separate development, two North Korean truck drivers, who had fled from a logging camp in Siberia, have asked for asylum after flying to South Korea from Moscow, intelligence officers said Monday.

They told reporters that more than 50 U.S. firms bring into the United States a variety of goods assembled in Haiti, including baseballs, clothing, floor tiles and fishing lures.

They said a United Nations embargo on fuel and weapons shipments to Haiti was leaking badly, harming Haiti's poor but not the military leaders it was intended to force from office.

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## Major urged to drop 'back to basics'

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major is under strong pressure to abandon his discredited "back to basics" crusade, say the Conservative Party's more radical members, British newspapers said Monday.

Senior Conservatives now admit that Mr. Major's flagship campaign for wholesome values has backfired on the government, laying it open to mockery over any individual failing or misdemeanour, the newspapers said.

The Daily Express said Monday the latest stain on the government's character, a weekend furore over a Conservative politician's friendship with a young researcher, had sounded the death knell for back to basics.

"Mr. Major should dump back to basics and get back to politics," the Today newspaper said in an editorial.

Other newspaper also quoted senior Conservative sources as saying the crusade, conceived late last year as a

non-contentious way of rallying the squabbling party behind Mr. Major, had been acknowledged as a miscalculation.

The campaign called for a return to traditional values and, although the government now says it was never about personal morality, encouraged the popular press to delve deep into the lives of conservative politicians to find any moral lapses.

Critics have said the debacle reveals Mr. Major's poor judgment in choosing such a vague concept as his policy theme and allowing right-wingers in the government to link "basics" in the public mind with personal morality.

In the first major blow to the crusade, a junior environment minister was forced to resign his job in January after admitting fathering a love child during an extra-marital affair.

Then another minister stepped down amid reports his wife's suicide was prompted by his friendship with another

woman.

The campaign, now redefined by the government as a concern for "commonsense" values in education and law and order, was left in total disarray last week when an up-and-coming politician Stephen Milligan was found asphyxiated at his home after what appeared to be a bizarre sexual experiment.

In the latest blow to back to basics, Conservative Member of Parliament Harley Booth stepped down as a ministerial aide in the Foreign Office late Saturday as newspapers splashed reports of his love for a 22-year-old researcher who used to work as a nude art model.

The Guardian newspaper said senior Conservatives had decided to abandon attempts to salvage the campaign and intended to let the slogan slip quietly into disuse.

But other reports said the government felt it would be too damaging to abandon the policy platform now.

## U.S. lawmaker visits Aung San Suu Kyi

RANGOON (AFP) — A U.S. congressman was among five people allowed by Burma's military authorities to meet dissident Aung San Suu Kyi at her home Monday, the first outsiders she has seen in almost five years of house arrest.

Representative Bill Richardson and the U.N. development programme's resident repre-

sentative here, Jehan Raheem, were among those allowed to see the Nobel Peace Prize winner, a reliable source said.

Previously, only immediate family members and security officials were able to enter the heavily guarded lakeside compound where Aung San Suu Kyi is confined in a residential area of Rangoon.

A succession of U.N. envoys

mandated to investigate alleged human rights abuses in Burma had tried without success to get permission to see her.

The meeting was apparently filmed, as a crew from Burmese state television was seen entering the premises at around 9 a.m. there was no official confirmation of the visit.

## Hosokawa faces fresh political turmoil

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, fresh from facing down U.S. President Bill Clinton in a bruising trade summit in Washington, returned to find his shaky ruling coalition in turmoil Monday.

A Tokyo newspaper reported Mr. Hosokawa might immediately reshuffle his seven-month-old cabinet to strengthen control over his fragile coalition, but government spokesman Masayoshi Takemura denied such a move was imminent.

"I talked (with Hosokawa) this morning, but I detected no sign of a cabinet reshuffle," Mr. Takemura told reporters. "I believe Prime Minister Hosokawa does not have a cabinet reshuffle in mind."

But Mr. Hosokawa himself did not completely rule out the possibility.

"I will consider whether to reshuffle the cabinet after the budget is settled," Mr. Hosokawa told reporters Monday.

The statement could refer to either cabinet approval of the 1994-95 state budget plan expected this Tuesday or final parliamentary approval expected sometime in April or May.

Quoting unnamed sources close to the prime minister, the Sankai Shimbun Daily reported Mr. Hosokawa had decided to reshuffle the cabinet on Tuesday or shortly after the government gave final approval to the budget.

Cabinet Secretary Takemura, and six others from the Socialist Party, Sankei said.

But some political analysts said a reshuffle could backfire and spell doom for the Hosokawa government.

"The coalition is already shaky enough. If Prime Minister Hosokawa moves ahead with a cabinet reshuffle, his coalition could collapse," Ryukoku University Professor Tadashi Iyasa said.

Most reshuffling would almost certainly prompt not only the Socialists, the biggest partner in the unwieldy eight-party coalition, but also Mr. Takemura's Harbinger New Party to pull out of the government, stripping Mr. Hosokawa of a governing majority, Prof. Iyasa said.

"The only way Hosokawa can stay in power is to keep the coalition in its present form," said leading political commentator Minoru Morita.

He said Mr. Hosokawa would secure strong public backing for his adamant refusal last week to bow to U.S. pressure on trade issues.

Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Clinton failed at their three-hour summit Friday to reach key accords mandated under a July 1993 economic framework pact aimed at cutting Japan's trade surplus and improving access to specific market sectors.

In the talks with Mr. Clinton, Mr. Hosokawa rejected setting numerical trade targets, arguing they would lead to managed trade. Washington said it needed quantifiable



## Belarus player wins Virginia Slims tourney

CHICAGO (AP) — Natalia Zvereva, whose tennis success has been shaped more by doubles, was not sure if she would ever win a singles title again. It had been four years, and even though she is only 22, she didn't like her chances.

"It's not that I didn't believe in myself," the Belarus player said Sunday after winning the Virginia Slims of Chicago 6-3, 7-5 over Chanda Rubin. "The competition is so much better now."

"I proved myself wrong," said Zvereva, who used a steady serve and a variety of shots, including a low-to-the-ground slice backhand to offset the hard ground strokes of the 17-year-old Rubin.

"She didn't like the low balls, especially to her backhand," Zvereva said. "I tried to keep the pace off. It helps a lot on a fast surface. A lot of girls hit balls deep, flat and hard. Sometimes it's not wise to hit it harder."

Zvereva, ranked second in the world in doubles and 19th in singles, took a 5-0 lead in the first set as Rubin, who won only two points in the first four games, sprayed errors all over the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion supreme surface.

But trailing 0-5 and love-40 after back-to-back double faults, Rubin lost her nerves and began to hit out in her first major tour final. The errors turned into winners as she fought off the three set points and then won three straight games.

"I couldn't get into the match early on, Rubin said. "I

was missing a lot of balls. After going down love-five, I hit a good ball for a point and I said to myself, 'Why not go for it now, you've got nothing to lose?' And I won the next three games."

Zvereva finally won the set 6-3 when Rubin, who had fended off two more set points in the ninth game, hit long.

Zvereva broke for a 3-2 lead in the second set, but Rubin broke right back, tying the set with a top spin lob and then holding for a 4-3 lead when Zvereva twice hit long and made another backhand error.

Zvereva then made two tough volleys to win the next game. But Rubin, who hit serves timed at 166 kph, came up with three strong serves in a row to escape a 0-30 hole and take a 5-4 lead.

Zvereva held for 5-5, then broke Rubin at love with a backhand winner down the line and three straight Rubin errors. The third one a swinging volley into the net.

"I went up 5-4, I started making a lot of errors. I don't know what happened to me," said Rubin, who made 36 unforced errors in the 80-minute match.

"I could not afford to go to a third set," Zvereva said. "My body is tired from all the tennis I have played this week. I knew I had to close it out." And she did. Rubin made more errors to start the final game and Zvereva punctuated her first singles victory since 1990 with an ace. She had five for match and got 61 per cent of her serves in.

## Pippen emerges from Jordan's shadow to star in All-Star Game

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Scottie Pippen, in the shadow of Michael Jordan's spotlight for the first six years of his career, knew it was time to grab it himself in the NBA All-Star Game.

"Having Michael on our club really overshadowed guys like Horace Grant, B.J. Armstrong and myself," Pippen said late Sunday after leading the East to a 127-118 victory over the West. "It was time for us to step up as All-Stars a little more. I had my mind set to play much better than I played an All-Star game."

Pippen, making his fourth All-Star appearance but his first since his superstar teammate on the Chicago Bulls retired last October, scored 29 points on 9-for-15 shooting and grabbed 11 rebounds to win most valuable player honours.

"I tried to assert myself a little more," Pippen said. "My skills are able to put me up among the elite players. I don't think I needed to go out today and prove anything to anybody."

East coach Lenny Wilkens, who this season became the second NBA coach with 900 career victories, had seven first-time All-Stars on his 12-man roster. But he went with his veterans when things got tight, especially Pippen, Mark Price and Patrick Ewing — who combined for 69 points.

"I just like the attitude of the guys," Wilkens said. "They showcase, but they're true competitors. When the game is on the line, they want to win. Pippen, Mark and Patrick were steady forces down the stretch."

Pippen, wearing fire-engine red shoes, averaged 9.3 points in his first three All-Star games. Despite his 29 points, he only scored two in the fourth quarter, but they were big — a baseline jumper with 2:10 left after the West pulled within two points.

"It was the shoes," Pippen joked about his performance. "Everybody was looking at my feet too much. I was shooting well and I just continued to let my shot flow."

The East took its largest lead, 103-90, in the first minutes of the fourth quarter, but the West rallied with a 17-5 run, closing to 108-107 with 7:17 left. Gary Payton's six points and Daid Robinson's five keyed the comeback.

But the East regained control as New York teammates Ewing and John Starks combined to score the next nine East points for a 117-110 lead.

A basket by Clifford Robinson and a 3-pointer by John Stockton made it 117-115 before Pippen, after missing two free throws, connected on his baseline shot.

David Robinson and Hakeem Olajuwon shared scoring honours with 19 points each for the West, which trails the All-Star series 28-16. Ewing scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter and Price also had 20 for the East, which had 10 3-pointers to one for the West. Pippen was 5-for-9 from that range.

"He was in a zone," West coach George Karl



NBA Eastern Conference's Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls goes to the bucket past Shawn Kemp of Seattle during the 2nd quarter of the All-Star Game (AP photo)

said. "It's difficult when you're substituting a great deal to keep the same guy on him."

Shaquille O'Neal, the NBA's leading scorer this season, had a miserable day for the East, missing 10 of 12 shots and seven of 11 free throws to finish with eight points. But he managed 10 rebounds.

"They were quadruple teaming me, triple teaming me," O'Neal said. "I thought somebody was going to play me straight up, but it didn't happen. It means somebody respects me if they had to put four guys on me."

The West, down by eight at halftime, rallied in the third quarter, closing within four twice before Price hit a jumper and a 3-pointer in a span of 37 seconds, helping the East rebuild the margin to 101-90 going into the final 12 minutes.

Olajuwon dominated inside for the West early in the game with 12 points in the first five minutes on two dunks, two layups, a hook and two free throws.

The West led 25-23 late in the first period, but the East went on a spurt and led 72-64 at the half.

## Germany, Norway and Russia reap Olympic victory

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Germany, Norway and Russia struck gold at the Lillehammer Games Monday. The United States reaped heartbreak.

Germany's George Hackl became the first solo luger to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals.

In Thomas Alsgaard, a bright new Norwegian cross-country star was born.

On the speedskating oval, Russia's Alexander Golubev set an Olympic record while leading his team to a 1-2 finish in the men's 500-metre sprint.

For the Americans, woes began when their luge medal hopes crashed out of competition. Then, hard-luck Dan Jansen slipped during the speedskating sprint and failed for the fourth-straight Olympics to mine gold or even the lesser metals of silver and bronze.

While vying athletes celebrated or raged on Lillehammer's ice and snow, "President Juan Antonio Samaranch headed for a real war zone — Sarajevo, the shattered site of the 1984 Winter Olympics.

During his visit to Bosnia, Samaranch wants "to renew the call for the 'Olympic truce'" the IOC said. Samaranch previously had urged Bosnia's warring factions to observe a cease-fire during the Feb. 12-27 Lillehammer Games.

On the third day of the games, the first gold medal went to Hackl, a 27-year-old Bavarian who began sledging at age 10. Supporters hoisted

him to their shoulders as his arch-rival Austria's Markus Prock — faded by a breath on the last of four runs in the two-day men's single event. The German's margin of victory was the equivalent of 13 inches (32.5 centimetres).

In the men's 30-kilometre freestyle, the 22-year-old Alsgaard left the starting line as an Olympic novice and finished a star, beating one of the favourites — countryman Bjorn Dablie — for the gold. Dablie, triple gold medalist at Albertville, France, two years ago, took silver. Bronze went to Finland's Mika Myllyla.

Golubev's time of 36.33 seconds in the 500 broke the old Olympic speedskating mark of 36.45 set by Uwe-Jens Mey of the former East Germany at Calgary in 1988.

Another Russian, Sergei Klevchenya also bested Mey's mark, winning the silver medal in 36.39. Manabu Horii of Japan won bronze in 36.53.

Jansen, who holds the world record of 35.76 and every other speedskating honour except an Olympic medal, slipped coming out of the turn and had to brace himself against the ice with his left hand. His time of 36.68 put him well out of medal contention.

"It's a bit of a shock to me," Jansen said. "I'm not making excuses, but it's not a place I've slipped before... I would have won by quite a bit if I didn't slip."

Jansen's wife, Robin, was in the stands with several family

members. She couldn't bear to watch after her husband's misstep.

"As soon as I slip, I said, 'Why God, again? God can't be cruel, she said. "I'm sure day we'll find out. One day we'll understand."

Despite his red-setting performances, the world Cup competition, the American champion continues to be haunted by an Olympic jinx. Six years ago this very date, his sister Jane Jansen Beres died of leukemia while Jansen was readying to compete at the Calgary Games. Then followed two Olympic falls in 1988 and two failures to medal at Albertville four years later.

Probably his last medal chance will come in Friday's 1,000 metres race.

Host Norway, which already has won two gold and three silver medals to lead the Lillehammer medal race, was given new hope for an Alpine victory as Lasse Jjus took Monday's downhill portion of the men's combined. He edged American Americans Kyle Rasmussen and Tommy Moe, gold medalist in Sunday's downhill.

At Lillehammer's Haakon ice hockey arena, a veteran German team outclassed a less experienced Norwegian six, 2-1. Germany went to 2-0 and the host Norwegians to 0-2 in Olympic pool play.

In other Hockey play Monday, the Czech republic faced Austria, and the favoured Russians were pitted against the Finns, 3-1 upset winners over the Czechs on opening day.

German luger Hackl began the third day of the games leading Prock by one-hundredth of a second, then fell behind by .48 of a second in the third run. But Prock faltered on the final run and finished .013 of a second behind Hackl.

## World record wiped out

BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — Colin Jackson equalled, but did not break, the world indoor 60-metre hurdles record over the weekend. British track officials said Monday.

A review of the photo-finish judge Raymond Hutchinson in Monday's edition of the Times, came when he had only a rushed look at the print before the time was announced at the meet.

Saturday. The difference was enough to round the Briton's time up to 7.36, instead of 7.35, to the American Gres Foster's seven-year-old mark.

The error, said photo-finish judge Raymond Hutchinson in Monday's edition of the Times, came when he had only a rushed look at the print before the time was announced at the meet.

## Martin wins ATP event

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AFP) — Todd Martin, runner-up at last month's Australian Open, went one step better to beat fellow-American Brad Gilbert 6-4, 7-5 in Sunday's \$800,000 Memphis ATP tournament.

Martin, ranked ninth in the world, won the second prize of his career and the \$110,500 first prize, by beating the two-time former champion 6-4, 7-5 in the final.

Twelve months ago Martin lost to Jim Courier in his first ATP final but he was saved from a rematch when the 39th-ranked Gilbert beat the world number-three in the quarter-finals.

Martin, beaten by Pete Sampras in the Australian Open final last month, outscored Gilbert and scored a big percentage of his points off Gilbert's second serves.

In the second-set Gilbert broke to lead 4-3, but Martin stormed back immediately and

went on to snatch victory on a Gilbert double-fault.

Gilbert has now lost seven straight finals since his last ATP triumph in 1990.

After his win Martin, who had lost five straight finals since winning at Coral Springs, Florida, last May said: "It's nice to complete the job this time."

"Brad lulls you to sleep with the softness of his balls. But when you make him hit a shot, he hits it hard and accurately. When you're even or ahead, he lulls you to sleep more. Whenever I was behind, I felt more intensity."

"I knew I would be at net more than he would be. I knew I had to be patient and when I had the chance to come in, I needed to hit a good approach shot and a good volley."

Gilbert said: "I wanted to slow him down because he likes the pace but my serve let me down. His future is looking really good. If he were a stock, you would want to buy some."

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI  
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### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠K764 ♣A9 07 ♦1098742  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♣ 3♦ ?

A.—Weak  
What do you bid now?  
A.—Had East passed you would probably have jumped to four spades, so why not make the same bid now? The problem with three spades is it doesn't sound all that invitational and could be made on a more balanced hand. Don't put pressure on partner. Take a shot at game.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠A9 ♣K97 ♦A185 ♣QJ4  
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?  
A.—There's a textbook bid that describes a perfectly balanced hand of 16-18 points with stoppers in the unbid suits. It's a jump to three no trump. Make it.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠1085 ♣AQ432 ♣Q ♠A102  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1♣ Pass 3NT Pass ?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minimum and tamely corrected to four hearts, you are undervaluing its trick-taking potential. With a known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠KQ4 ♣87 ♦AK874 ♠1065  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♣ Pass 2♦ Pass ?

A.—The auction has developed awkwardly. You can't rebid diamonds or support hearts, you have no second suit and, with the club suit unstopped, any no-trump bid is out of the question. The solution is to lie a little and show your strong holding in spades, hoping partner will be able to bid no trump. Two spades is the least of evils.

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠AK984 ♣110843 ♣K3 ♠6  
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What action do you take?  
A.—If a cue-bid of two clubs specifically shows both majors and a hand of limited strength, this is not the holding for that bid—it is too strong defensively. Overall one spade and hope you get the opportunity to show your hearts later. Don't make a takeout double—that action is not recommended on a two-suited hand.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠KQ9 ♣A10842 ♠103 ♠A94  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1♣ Pass 1♦ Pass ?

A.—The choice lies between one no trump and two spades. With a weak doubleton in one suit and superb three-card support for partner's suit, the raise to two spades stands out by the proverbial mile.

PARIS (AFP) — Europe's top teams came under relentless pressure over the weekend.

Johan Cruyff's Barcelona were left shell-shocked after crashing to a 6-3 defeat at Real Zaragoza.

Bayern Munich threw away their chance of catching leaders Eintracht Frankfurt when they were inexplicably beaten 3-1 at home by modest Stuttgart.

Only eight first division teams managed to reach the last sixteen of the French Cup competition.

And while spurs, went on goal-scoring spree AC Milan found themselves struggling to score a 1-0 home win against Cremonese — a team reduced to ten players.

Barcelona's humiliation began when Real Zaragoza slotted home four goals in a confidence-destroying first-half. Argentinian Fernando Caceres was on target for the home side in the fifth minute. Jose Gay made it 2-0 a quarter

of an hour later and Juan Enaider had scored two more before the break.

Barcelona's Brazilian Front-runner Romario had scored for the visitors in the 31st minute and things looked fractionally brighter when Denmark's Michael Laudrup cut the arrears further. But Gran-cisco Higueria and Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet added more goals before Romario scored his second goal of the match.

Meanwhile Real Madrid, themselves in crisis only a week ago and with coach Benito Floro facing the axe, leapfrogged Cruyff's men into second place with a 1-0 win over Real Oviedo.

That win follows last week's 2-0 triumph over league leaders Deportivo la Coruna, who themselves bounced back Sunday by beating Sevilla 2-0. Beto scoring one minute before the break and Fran a minute after.

Deportivo are now on 34

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	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	Nabil Al Mashal Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
	Jane Fonda — in <b>OLD GRINGO</b> Shows: 12.30, 3, 8.30, 10.30	Stallone...in <b>CLIFFHANGER</b> Show: 12.30, 3.40, 6.30, 8.30, 10.30	<b>CONCORD '1'</b> Last Action Hero Shows: 12.30, 3, 8.30, 10.30 <b>CONCORD '2'</b> Batman Returns Shows: 12.30, 3.	presents a play entitled: <b>AL Him Nuron</b> A popular political comedy Actors: Abber Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Sheer, Foad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents <b>Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play)</b> daily at 8:30 p.m. Theatre is closed Mondays and Tuesdays

مكتبة عن الناصر



## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Assad sends Ramadan greetings to King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday received a letter from Syrian President Hafez Al Assad congratulating him on the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. Assad wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

## Saddam's son-in-law recovers from surgery

AMMAN (AP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamil Hassan Al Majid, was recovering here Monday from a brain tumour, a medical official said. Gen. Majid, 36, entered the King Hussein Medical Centre here last Tuesday and underwent an operation on Saturday, the official told AFP. He will remain at least another week in the hospital which is under tight security, added the official, who could not give further details on the operation's outcome.

## Lebanon guerrillas wound militiaman

MARJAYOUN (R) — Pro-Iranian guerrillas firing mortar bombs and anti-tank rockets attacked two Israeli-backed militia posts in South Lebanon on Monday, wounding one soldier, security sources said. A roadside bomb planted by Hizbollah guerrillas also hit a civilian car near the village of Tair Herfa inside Israel's occupation zone in the south, they said. The sources said the car was badly damaged but the driver escaped unhurt. His identity was not known. Hizbollah guerrillas fired rocket propelled grenades and anti-tank rockets at the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia position in Braacheet and mortar bombs at the SLA's Kfar Hounneh post. One militiaman was wounded at Kfar Hounneh but there were no casualties at Braacheet. Israeli and SLA gunners retaliated, shelling a guerrilla-held area north of the 15-kilometre deep buffer strip.

## Israelis join Palestinian's appeal

TEL AVIV (AP) — Three Israeli authors joined a Palestinian poet in appealing Sunday to the supreme court against an "exceedingly slow" probe into the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old Palestinian in November. Poet Izzat Ghazawi's son Rami died after being shot in the stomach by troops who stormed his high school in the West Bank town of Al Birh to quell a stone-throwing demonstration. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said the boy was shot while trying to help a wounded friend. He later died in hospital. Mr. Ghazawi told Israel Radio he wanted to know "why the military did not investigate the problem until now." Also listed on the petition are authors David Grossman, Shulamit Hareven and Galit Hazan-Rokem. The civil rights group's lawyer, Eliahu Abram, said that key witnesses to the shooting had not been contacted.

## Yemen tries to free kidnapped Chinese

SANAA (AFP) — The Yemeni government is trying to win the release of three Chinese technicians who were kidnapped while helping to build a road in Yemen's rugged northeast. Chinese embassy officials said here Monday, "We hope they will be freed in the next few days," a Chinese diplomat said. "The Yemeni government is working hard for their release." The three were kidnapped Saturday morning while working on a road between Hija, 127 kilometres north of Sanaa and Maareb, 173 kilometres east of the capital. Embassy officials said Yemeni sources said the Chinese were kidnapped by three people wanted by the police for various murders. There were no details on what the kidnappers wanted and where they were holding the technicians.

## U.S. Navy rescues Indian livestock vessel

BAHRAIN (AP) — A U.S. Navy frigate has rescued an Indian livestock vessel and its 23-member crew which had been adrift for 15 days on the Arabian Sea, the navy said Monday. The 27-metre Shahe Al Hasan was sailing from Somalia to Dubai with 700 sheep aboard when it experienced engine trouble, according to a statement from the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. On Saturday, a helicopter from the USS Centur spotted the troubled vessel about 150 kilometres southeast of Oman and the frigate towed it to shore. The crew of 17 Indians and six Somalis were given food and water, which had begun to run scarce, the statement said.

## Qian plans trip to Pakistan, Iran

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen will make a two-week trip to five Asian and Middle Eastern countries, including close allies Pakistan and Iran, starting next week, the Xinhua news agency said Monday. Beginning Feb. 21, Mr. Qian will visit Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Iran, in that order, returning home March 6. Xinhua said, without providing details on the itinerary. The first stop, Pakistan, is a country with which China enjoys traditionally excellent relations, as demonstrated when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made a trip to Beijing in December, just after her return to power. Pakistan and China are engaged in nuclear cooperation which has worried Western countries, and during Ms. Bhutto's trip to the Chinese capital a joint communiqué demanded the lifting of U.S. sanctions imposed on both countries last August to protest the alleged Chinese sale of missile technology to the Pakistanis. In another dispatch, Xinhua said Mr. Qian had received Monday a special envoy of Bhutto, adding that they "exchanged opinions on issues of common concern." Iran, the last stop on Mr. Qian's trip, is another old friend of China. The two countries decided to step up cooperation — especially on nuclear power — during a trip to China by Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani in September 1992. Western countries also accuse China of selling missile technology to Iran.

## Druze leader welcomes papal visit

BEIRUT (R) — Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, whose forces drove Christians from the Shout mountains during Lebanon's civil war, called for coexistence with the Christians and welcomed Pope John Paul II's planned visit to Lebanon. Mr. Jumblatt attended Sunday mass at a Maronite Christian church in the Shout village of Beit Ednine, the first held there since it was badly damaged in fighting between Druze and Christian forces in 1983. "We are all waiting for the blessed visit of the great guest, the holy father, to Lebanon and specifically to Beit Ednine," he said after the mass. Pope John Paul is due to make a week-long trip to Lebanon by June and Vatican envoys have visited the Shout to prepare for his visit to the area. Mr. Jumblatt said in December that he was not sure he wanted to see the Pope visit the predominantly Druze Shout mountains. But he said on Sunday: "We will cooperate together so that we have an appropriate reception which confirms that the Shout was and will remain an area of coexistence."

## Kuwaiti cabinet to resign in mid-March

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwaiti cabinet will resign in mid-March and a new government will be formed, the Monday edition of Al-Siyasah daily reported, adding that the country's leaders wanted to strengthen the executive. The paper, citing informed sources, said the resignation would occur after 'Eid Al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan which began Feb. 11 in Kuwait. Senior Kuwaiti officials want to "bolster the executive branch by unifying positions and speeding up the decision-making process," the paper said. Al-Siyasah said the current government had accomplished its mission by reviving the 1962 constitution and parliamentary life.

## France to consider excluding Jordanians from exit permit rule

By Suhair Obeldat  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — France has promised to consider excluding Jordanians from new exit permit regulations it will impose on foreign nationals residing in its territories, a senior Foreign Ministry official said Monday.

The official, who asked not to be identified by name, disclosed that the promise was made during the talks French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe held here during his two-day visit which ended Sunday.

On Saturday, France decreed that nationals of 13 countries, including Jordanians, will need exit visas to leave France. The decree, signed by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, was published Saturday in the government's official journal, meaning it took effect as law.

The Jordanian government was notified of the new regulations by its embassy in Paris and then acting foreign minister, Fawaz Abu Al Ghanam, raised the issue with Mr. Juppe who promised to discuss the matter with the French interior minister, the official told to Jordan Times.

A French official was quoted Saturday as saying that the requirement, to take effect on April 1, was needed because these countries were considered "sensitive."

"We are a victim of terrorism and fighting hard against it," said the Jordanian official, adding that Jordan's other concern was that other European countries would follow France's lead in adopting such measures.

"To our knowledge, the number of Jordanian nationals residing in Paris does not exceed 40-50 people. But this is a political issue. We hope that France will reconsider its decision," the official said.

On Monday, Pierre Galss-

man, the press attache at the French embassy in Amman, said that his government had not yet given him reasons for the new regulations.

In addition to Jordan, other countries affected by the measure include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. Palestinians will also need the exit permits.

The exit visas are aimed in particular at curbing illegal entry by immigrants who have been sent or otherwise acquired documents belonging to foreigners who have remained in France, according to some reports.

The introduction of visas will mean that on reentry papers will bear proof that the holder had actually left the country, Reuters reported.

The decree stemmed from a little noticed provision in a controversial headline law proposed by the conservative government and adopted by parliament last August, the agency said.

The law restricts the right of foreigners to enter and reside in France and curtails clandestine immigration by clamping down on marriages of convenience and family reunification.

An administrative memorandum requiring exit visas of nationals from more than 50 foreign countries, published in 1986, was ruled unconstitutional in 1991, the official said.

Yves Jouffa, honorary president of the human rights league, said the exit visa requirement was supposed to be a mere formality but the government could easily use the authority to harass foreigners.

"Today France is becoming a country with some of the most restrictive anti-foreign laws," Mr. Jouffa told France-3 television.

## Juppe: France, Israel tightening military ties

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel and France will tighten military and political ties, French Minister Alain Juppe said Monday after talks with Israeli leaders in which he also promised to lend active support to Middle East peace talks.

"We have agreed to give new momentum to Israeli-French relations, tightening cooperation on security, particularly in research," he said. France's Defence Minister Francois Leotard would visit Israel next month.

He noted that the two countries were already cooperating on scientific endeavours, including space research.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin thanked Mr. Juppe for France's help in negotiations to upgrade Israel's 19-year relationship with the European

Community (EC).

Mr. Rabin reported to Mr. Juppe about Middle East peace efforts and said that "security issues were the key to continued political process with the Palestinians and neighbouring countries," a statement from Mr. Rabin's office said.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) reached agreement on security measures last week in Cairo.

Mr. Rabin and Mr. Juppe also discussed plans to give financial assistance to Palestinians for economic development under the autonomy to be implemented in the occupied territories as part of the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord.

European nations have promised to contribute \$600 million to the Palestinians.

## Cairo deal a retreat for PLO, Habash asserts

From Michael Jansen in Damascus

In an interview, Dr. George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), told this correspondent why he rejected not only the Cairo agreement on security arrangements for the Palestinian self-rule area concluded on Feb. 9 but also the declaration of principles negotiated in Oslo.

The interview took place at his office in an elegant old house in a quiet, residential quarter of this city. Dr. Habash, well recovered from three serious strokes and sporting a cheerful burgundy red cardigan, spoke in both Arabic and English.

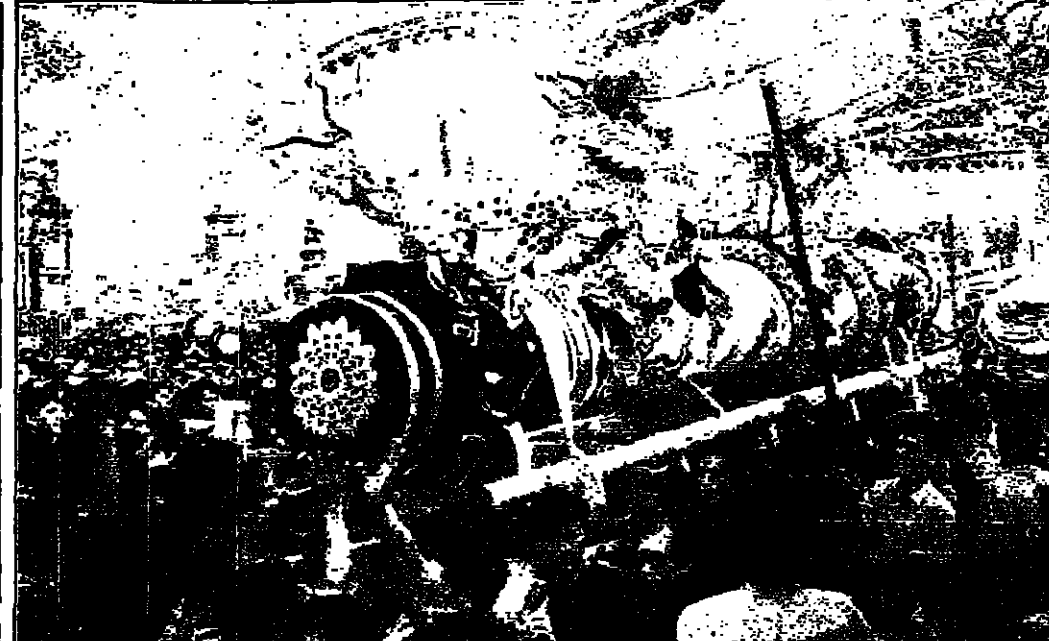
The Cairo accord, which gives Israel full control of the border crossings from Jordan and Egypt into the West Bank and Gaza and full control of access roads to Jewish settlements with the right to pursue of Palestinian militants continuing their resistance to the occupation, amounts to a "retreat for the PLO," Dr. Habash stated, a "retreat" from its own long-term policy of striving to secure "national rights, self-determination, independence and the right of return for the Palestinian people." The majority of Palestinians now oppose Mr. Arafat's policies, "including members of Fateh closest to him."

Dr. Habash's assessment of the Cairo agreement would seem to be correct because on Feb. 10, the morning after it was signed, a commentator on Israeli Radio said that Israel's main reason for retaining control of the border crossings was to prevent Palestinian expellees from exercising their right of return to their homeland.

Mr. Arafat, he stated, "was being pushed by all the major blocs and powers — Europe, the U.S., Japan — to offer more and more concessions to achieve implementation" of the Oslo accord, the signing of which led to the resignation of the PFLP from the PLO Executive Committee. He was particularly critical of Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, who has been pressing the PLO to make these harmful concessions, and the U.S., which, he said, was acting "in their own interests" and not those of the Palestinian people.

"Arafat," Dr. Habash asserted, "had no chance to make gains (for the Palestinian people) but could only make concessions... All the world accepts Israel and all the world, except Israel, accepts the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" but the pressure for concessions is on the Palestinians not on Israel.

The Oslo accord, he went on, was seriously flawed because "all the substantive



FIRECRACKERS: Men carry in procession a huge firecracker during a festival organised at Dong Ky village, some 20 kilometres northwest of Hanoi, Vietnam. In Dong Ky, village clans get together every year from five different villages to compete for the honour of having made the most powerful with the loudest explosion (AFP photo)

## Libya denies link to Maaytah murder

CAIRO (AP) — Libya on Monday denied reports linking it to the assassination of a Jordanian diplomat and charged the Western media with attempting to disrupt its "brotherly relations" with Jordan.

The Libyan statement follows a remark Sunday by King Hussein that the leader of the group that assassinated Naye Maaytah gave this order to kill the diplomat out of the Arab capital where he is based.

In its denial, the official Libyan news agency JANA blamed the Western media for "implicating Libya with the aim of harming it and of harming its brotherly relations with Jordan," the AP reported.

On Sunday, King Hussein told the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that a terrorist group, known to Jordan, had killed Mr. Maaytah, 42. He did not name the group but said it had committed "similar crimes against our diplomats and against us in the past."

Although Libya in past four years tried to change its image as a supporter of terrorists, it recently strengthened rhetoric against the West. Last month, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi openly invited Abu Nidal and Ahmad Jibril, another Palestinian guerrilla leader, to Libya.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al Banna, has been blamed for the killing of a number of Jordanian diplomats. He split from the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1973 and at various times had links to Iraq, Syria and Libya. His group was blamed for the 1985 attacks on Rome and Vienna airports that killed 17 people.

Mr. Maaytah was shot dead in Beirut on Jan. 29 as he was driving out of his garage to work.

## Sudan rebels claim town attack foiled

MUNDRI, Sudan (Agencies) — Sudanese rebels have repulsed a government offensive on the southern town of Mundri near the Zairean border.

Guerrilla area commander Gier Chaung told reporters who visited the frontline that government forces briefly captured Mundri on Saturday but were driven out later that afternoon.

"The Khartoum flag was raised over Mundri for two hours but we reorganised and fought them off," he said. Ten government soldiers were killed for the loss of one guerrilla killed and 10 wounded.

Officials of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said the attack on Mundri, part of the biggest dry season offensive in 10 years, forced 40,000 terrified villagers to flee.

The government launched

its offensive with an artillery bombardment and took the town 20 minutes later.

Reporters were forced to withdraw but returned the next day and found the town back in SPLA hands.

Mr. Chaung showed reporters a government soldier captured during the fighting. Yusef Hamoosa told reporters he was part of two government battalions which left Terakeka 200 kilometres away to attack.

The rebel forces also captured some mortars, an anti-aircraft gun and a large quantity of ammunition.

Another SPLA commander, Malual Ayom Dur, told reporters government forces had retreated to Amadi 40 kilometres away.

"Our men are in pursuit of them. Hopefully we will recapture Amadi within the next couple of days," he said.

## TV producer shot dead in Algerian terror campaign

ALGIERS (AFP) — An Algerian television producer was shot twice by armed gunmen Monday as more Islamic fundamentalists were sentenced by special courts and threats of a stepped up Ramadan terror campaign mounted.

Producer Aziz Smati, 40, was waiting for an emergency operation in hospital after being shot twice by gunmen in front of his Algiers home, his family said.

Mr. Smati, who also worked on musical variety programmes for Algeria's French-speaking third station, joins a growing number of Algerian arts and media personalities to have been attacked during Algeria's two year undeclared civil war between the military dominated government and fundamentalists.

Twenty-seven Islamic fundamentalists were handed prison sentences of up to 20 years

Monday for gun running for fundamentalist groups, sources at the special court at Oran, western Algeria, said.

Six of the accused heard the sentences of up to eight years in the court. The remaining 21, who are still on the run, were sentenced to up to 20 years, the maximum demanded by the prosecutor, in their absence, sources added.

The group, from the Maghnia border town with Morocco, were accused of smuggling arms across the frontier to armed fundamentalists and helping veterans of the Afghan war against the Soviet Union to slip into Algeria.

Islamic militants have threatened tax officials, traders and women in a fundamentalist backlash seeking to impose a climate of terror as Ramadan gets underway, newspaper reports said Monday.

## COLUMN

## Melina Mercouri hospitalised in New York

ATHENS (AFP) — Melina Mercouri, Greek minister of culture, was admitted to Memorial Hospital in New York for a series of tests, her ministry said here Monday. Ms. Mercouri travelled to the United States last week with her husband Jules Dassin, a cinema director, and her brother Spyros Mercouri, a 1989 doctor at Memorial operated on Mercouri, 69, to remove a tumor from her lungs. She also underwent surgery to her spine in Paris in August 1991, and was later treated for pulmonary blood clots.

## Benin diplomat found with heroin

COTONOU (AFP) — A Benin diplomat serving in the United States was questioned at New York airport after being found with four kilos (eight pounds) of heroin, the Foreign Ministry said here Monday. The drug was hidden in the false bottom of a suitcase carried by Abdoul Karim as he arrived in the United States on Feb. 3, the ministry added.

## Australian Navy invaders driven off by farmer

AUCKLAND (AFP) — An elderly man armed with a shotgun drove off an invading force of Australian Navy sailors who tried to land on his beach while on exercise, authorities revealed here Monday. A "force" of 18 Australian naval officers from the destroyer Canberra hit the remote beach on the Coromandel peninsula, east of here, Saturday evening and headed toward a house to explain what they were up to. According to Commodore Fred Wilson of the New Zealand Navy the Australians quickly got their marching orders from a man armed with a shotgun who fired twice into the air. With discretion being the better part of valour, the Australians promptly retreated to their ship. Wilson said no casualties were sustained.

## Thief pockets ancient coins from Hermitage

MOSCOW (AFP) — A thief broke into the Hermitage Museum in the northern Russian city of St. Petersburg overnight and stole three "very valuable" Roman coins dating from the third century. Russian Television reported. The report said the room where the coins were being stored did not have an alarm and added that experts had concluded the items were stolen by a collector and would probably not be offered for sale on the black market. Nothing else was reported missing from the museum which houses one of the most prestigious art and antique collections in Europe. Museum officials could not be reached for comment.

## Parents battling to keep child on life support

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP) — Thirteen-year-old Teresa Hamilton lies in intensive care, her heart kept alive by drugs, a respirator filling and emptying her lungs. Three scans have shown no brain activity. At her bedside, her parents' battle hospital officials who insist that nothing more can be done and Teresa should be taken off life support. "She is fighting. We are fighting," Scotty Hamilton said. "We will not arbitrarily end her life. We will not take a chance away from her." Teresa is not the classic case of a family fighting to end a loved one's suffering while doctors try to maintain life at all costs. It is a family refusing to let go of a patient that every doctor who has been consulted says is brain dead. "We want to do the right thing," Sarasota Memorial Hospital President Michael Covert said. "The concern on the part of the staff is that there's nothing more that we can do." The hospital's Ethics Committee has met four times on Teresa's case, each time its members have reached the same conclusion: discontinuing treatment. But the hospital's lawyers, fearing liability, have advised just the opposite.